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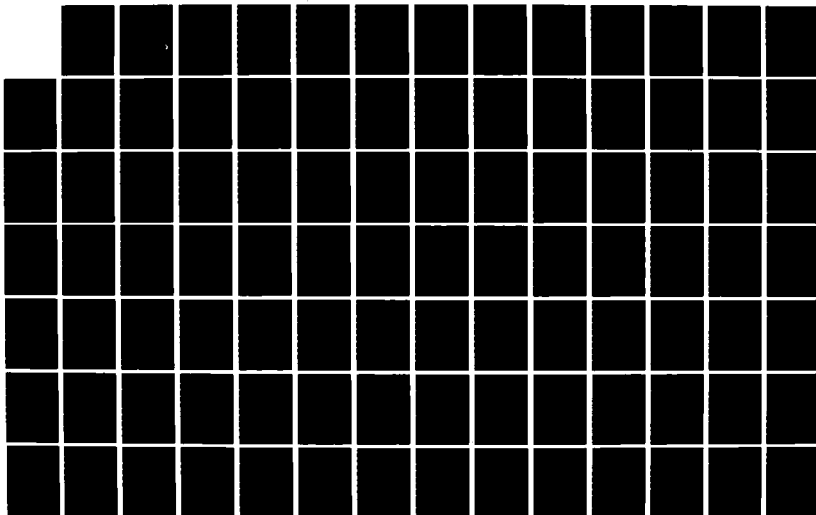
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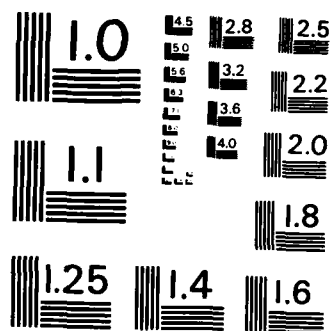
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THE SOVIET UNION AND GERMAN REUNIFICATION

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THE SOVIET UNION AND GERMAN REUNIFICATION

John Alt Crumplar
Colorado Springs, Colorado

B.S., United States Military Academy, 1975

A Thesis Presented to the Graduate
Faculty of the University of Virginia
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Woodrow Wilson Department of Government and Foreign Affairs
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It has been forty years since the conclusion of the Second World War and the question of German reunification has still not been resolved. The German Question was a major topic of discussion between the West and the Soviet Union during the postwar period of the 1940's and throughout the 1950's. It was a commonly held view that the question of German reunification was the key to peace in Europe. The fact that the two superpowers almost came to blows over the German Question during the Berlin crises of 1948 and 1958 further strengthened this perception. After the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, however, the question of German reunification ceased to be a topic of discussion between the superpowers.

Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik of the late 1960's and early 1970's further solidified the postwar division of Germany for it granted de facto if not formal recognition of the East German regime. Shortly thereafter the German Democratic Republic (GDR) shed its status as an international pariah when it was formally recognized throughout the world and entered the United Nations along with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).

Although the Ostpolitik forged by Brandt and continued by his successors has not succeeded in effecting reunification, it has helped maintain a common German identity in both German states. West and East Germans alike continue to see themselves not as West or East Germans, but as Germans. As long as this common German identity perseveres, the question of German reunification cannot be considered closed.

The recent rapprochement between the two German states engineered by the FRG's Helmut Kohl and the GDR's Erich Honecker, while relations between the two superpowers were strained, rekindled speculation about the German Question. Honecker's scheduled visit to the FRG in the fall of 1984 furthered heightened media interest in the West. The German Question of reunification was being revived.

Although remarks by Western statesmen such as Italian foreign minister Giulio Andreotti highlight the fact that the West may not be too enthusiastic about German reunification, the West would allow German reunification as long as it did not result in a Sovietized Germany. This writer also believes, perhaps naively, that the United States would withdraw its forces from the FRG, if West Germany demanded a Western withdrawal. The recent Soviet pressure on Honecker to

cancel his widely-publicized visit to the FRG, however, suggests that the Soviet's would only withdraw from the GDR on their own volition. Thus, the Soviet Union is the key to the question of German reunification.

Because the German people will not let the question of German reunification die and because the Soviet Union is the key obstacle to reunification, it is worthwhile to understand Soviet policy towards the German Question. Therefore this thesis will be an attempted analysis of the Soviet Union's policy toward the question of German Reunification.

The first chapter will discuss the Soviet policy towards German reunification from the Teheran summit until Stalin's death. The second chapter will analyze Soviet policy towards the German Question after Stalin's death until the building of the Berlin Wall. The latter will be treated as a watershed, for after the construction of the Wall neither the Soviet Union nor the GDR would offer plans for reunification.

In these two chapters, this thesis will attempt to answer the following questions: Did the Soviets ever seriously consider a neutral reunified Germany to preclude a strong West Germany aligned with the West? Were the Soviets willing to give up the Sovietized Eastern Zone to prevent first the formation of the FRG

and subsequently the rearmament and integration of the FRG into the Western alliance? If not, were the many Soviet proposals simply attempts to prevent or delay West German rearmament and alignment with the West? Did the Soviets actually want a reunified Communist Germany?

Unlike the student of Western foreign policy, the Soviet foreign policy observer does not have access to foreign ministry archives or the memoirs of former leaders. Thus, one can only reasc ably guess what Soviet policy objectives are or were from a mosaic of Soviet actions and statements. Consequently this writer will attempt to extract Soviet aims concerning the German Question during the late 1940's and 1950's from Soviet unilateral actions, diplomatic initiatives, public proposals, and Soviet press commentary. This approach will be used against the backdrop of external geopolitical, domestic, and internal political constraints on Soviet policy towards Germany.

Although one does not have access to Soviet policy debates or position papers, one does have ready access to Soviet weekly and daily journals. On one hand, these publications furnish the observer with the official public Soviet line. On the other hand, one must remember that these journals are also tools of propaganda and realize that the public positions stated

in these journals may not have coincided with the Soviet elites' true objectives.

To better ascertain what the actual Soviet objectives were, this observer will also rely on the first hand accounts of the various Western statesmen who dealt with the Soviets throughout this period. Finally, the observer will utilize numerous works by Western scholars concerning the German Question, Soviet Foreign Policy and Western Foreign Policy.

The third chapter will deal with the future prospects of German reunification. The writer will precariously attempt to predict future Soviet policy toward German reunification by looking at the Soviet-East German relationship and recent Soviet actions and comments toward the inter-German relationship. In this discussion the writer will use both Soviet journals and Western sources. This chapter will also discuss several neutralist plans for reunification vis-a-vis the Soviets, based on these authors' works. Finally the writer will offer a possible model for reunification the Soviets might consider.

CHAPTER II

STALIN'S POLICY TOWARDS THE GERMAN QUESTION

Many observers including Willy Brandt have adhered to the view that the Soviet Union may have been ready to compromise with the West and accept a neutral reunified German state in 1952, but the West failed to respond to these Soviet overtures. On the other hand, many others have characterized Soviet policy after the Second World War until Stalin's death as a planned, deliberate, conspiracy to establish a communist reunified Germany. A leader of this school of thought was Konrad Adenauer who describes Soviet intentions as the following:

The aim of the Russian was unambiguous. Soviet Russia had, like Tsarist Russia, an urge to acquire or subdue new territories in Europe. ... Soviet Russia was making quite clear that for the time being she was not willing to release the German territory she had been allowed to take over, and that moreover she had every intention of gradually drawing the other part of Germany toward her as well.¹

What then were the Soviet objectives concerning the fate of post war Germany? Was Stalin willing to give up a compliant sovietized East Germany for a reunified nonaligned neutral Germany? Or was he planning on using

¹Konrad Adenauer, Memoirs, trans. Beate Ruhm von Oppen (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1966), p. 78.

the eastern zone as a spring board to a reunified communist Germany? If so, was Stalin following a deliberate strategy to meet his post war objectives concerning Germany? To ascertain the Soviet intentions concerning the reunification of Germany, this chapter will try to analyze the policy of the Soviet Union towards Germany from the waning moments of World War II until Stalin's death. In the process of this analysis I will discuss the following: Soviet participation at the summit conferences, Soviet proposals to the West in 1946 and 1947, Soviet actions in the eastern zone, the internal Soviet debate, the Berlin crisis of 1948, and finally the Soviet proposals of the early 1950's.

A. Desire to Keep Germany Weak

At the Teheran Conference, Stalin proposed a toast to the execution of some 50,000 German officers at the end of the war. Stalin traced a frontier for Germany which would give Konigsberg to the Soviet Union, leaving the larger nation, as he said 'on the neck of Germany'. Stalin predicted that Germany would rebuild her power in fifteen or twenty years, therefore German industrial capacity should be reduced. The Soviet Union also needed German machinery to replace destroyed equipment and at least 4 million Germans as laborers in the work of Soviet reconstruction.²

²Frederick H. Hartmann, Germany Between East And West, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1965), p. 16.

From one observer's account of the Soviet proposal at the Teheran conference one first sees the thread that would be common to all of the summit conferences; the Soviet desire to insure that Germany would be so weak that she would never again threaten the Soviet Union and to use German reparations to rebuild the Soviet economy. One also sees a desire for revenge which would detract from accomplishment of Soviet objectives.

In addition, Stalin proposed that Germany should be permanently divided, so that it would never again pose a threat to global peace and that the Polish boundaries should be moved to the West to compensate for Soviet gains in the East.³ Thus, one first sees the example of Stalin's aim to weaken Germany through territorial loss.

At Yalta in 1945, Stalin once again mentioned partition as the permanent solution to the German Question, though he failed to provide a specific formula. Reviewing the State Department minutes, it appears as if Stalin was skillfully attempting to get his Western counterparts to commit to German dismemberment before he would do so. Although the

³William E. Griffith, The Ostpolitik of the Federal Republic of Germany (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978), p. 27; Don L. Mansfield, Soviet Foreign Policy and the Problem of German Unity, (San Francisco: S.F. State College, 1965), p. 24.

Western leaders deferred the subject of partition until a later date, they did agree to add a clause on German dismemberment to the surrender document at Stalin's request. Charles Bohlen wrote that Stalin was probably hoping to use a Western commitment to partition for Soviet propaganda purposes.⁴ Given Soviet anxiety about a separate peace, Stalin may have been hoping to get a Western agreement on partition to discourage separate peace overtures from the Germans to the West. Thus, Stalin may have only been leaning toward a position of partition to preclude the possibility of a separate peace.

Stalin also attempted to persuade the allies that German reparations should be at least ten billion dollars and that sixty per cent of German production should be expropriated by the allies for the following ten years. Initially the Soviets had demanded twenty billion dollars and eighty percent of German production.⁵ The allies refused to accept these demands, however once again we see the Soviet desire to insure that Germany would remain weak and that the

⁴Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conference at Malta and Yalta 1945 (Washington: U.S. Govt, 1955), pp. 611-631, 712-717; Charles Bohlen, Witness to History (New York: Norton, 1973), p. 183.

⁵FRUS, pp. 611-631.

Soviet economy would be rebuilt at the expense of the Germans.

At Yalta, Stalin and President Roosevelt had a conversation which may have influenced Stalin to rethink his policy towards the German Question. According to former Secretary of State Stettinius, President Roosevelt said the following in response to Stalin's query on the status of American troops in a postwar Germany:

I can get the people and congress to cooperate freely for peace but not to keep an army in Europe for a long time. Two years would be the limit.⁶

Shortly after the Yalta conference, there appeared to be a significant shift in Soviet policy towards partition. S.T. Gusev, the Soviet delegate to the London committee on dismemberment, stated that dismemberment should only be used as a last resort. Stalin himself proclaimed to the Russian people on May 9, 1945 that, "The Soviet Union ... does not intend to dismember or destroy Germany."⁷

Why the sudden change in Soviet policy or was it? Given Stalin's actions at Yalta, there is some question

⁶Edward Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1948), p. 127.

⁷A. Sokolov, "Inviolability of International Agreements", New Times No. 16 (April 18, 1947), p. 6.

whether he was actually for dismemberment. As other evidence will show he was probably still pondering his policy toward the German Question.

However, in light of Roosevelt's remarks about American troops in Europe, Stalin may have thought it was only a matter of time before the United States would withdraw their forces from Europe. In that scenario, there would not be a strong western power to counter the Soviet presence. Thus, Stalin would have been in favor of a weak reunified Germany, which the Soviets could easily dominate.

At the last summit conference at Potsdam, the Soviets demanded four power control of the Ruhr industrial area. Thus, it was not surprising that Stalin continued a policy against partition. Stalin also continued to demand 10 billion dollars in reparations from Germany, but refused to divulge how much the Soviets had already taken from their zone.⁸

Stalin attempted in vain to get the West to formalize the Oder-Neisse boundary, although he did get them to agree in principle. The following passage from Adam Ulam's work concerning this policy lends credence to the view that the Soviets were now favorable to a

⁸Mansfield, Problem of German Unity, p. 31.

reunified Germany:

Had they acquiesced in their allies views that the Oder and Eastern Neisse river be the frontier, communist East Germany would be today a much more feasible state, their own bid as protectors of German nationalism more convincing ... But the arrangements on which the Soviets insisted so strenuously in 1945 and for which they were willing to pay fairly substantially reveals another point. There was obviously no certainty in the Soviet mind in 1945 that Germany would not be reunited within a few years and free of all foreign military occupations. They thus contemplated without regret the territorial diminution of Germany even though this diminution was at the expense of their own zone."⁹

From the summit conference, the following Soviet objectives crystallize: (1) To insure Germany would remain weak by a loss of territory in the east and, by allied (including Soviet) control of the Ruhr, (2) To follow a reparations policy which would simultaneously weaken Germany and rebuild the Soviet Union.

B. Reparations: The Driving Force

During the years 1946 and 1947 the allies attempted to resolve the German Question through a series of foreign minister meetings. At the first Council of Ministers meeting in the spring of 1946 at Paris, Molotov asked to delay the discussion on the economic unity of Germany. Why?

⁹Adam Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974), p. 392.

Neither the Anglo-American bizonal agreement nor the Marshall Plan had yet emerged. The German economy was in shambles. According to one observer, the Soviets hoped to delay any agreement on economics which might facilitate an economic recovery. This stalling tactic would not only continue to keep Germany weak, but it would also place a tremendous strain on Western resources. If Germany had continued to be a drain on the United States, the resolve of the Americans may have sufficiently weakened to demand a troop withdrawal.¹⁰

At the Moscow conference of Foreign Ministers the Soviets presented a plan for the reunification of Germany, which called for free elections. This would be the only time in which a Soviet plan would call for elections until the famous notes of 1952. Why the sudden call for elections in 1947, and then the failure to respond to subsequent Western calls until 1952? One must remember that the Marshall Plan had not yet come into effect, and that all of Germany was still in the midst of an economic crisis. With the French and Italian Communist parties doing well at the ballot box, Stalin perhaps felt that the Soviet sponsored party SED

¹⁰Mansfield, Problem of German Unity, p. 53.

could receive a plurality of votes legally.¹¹

With or without a plurality, Molotov's program would have guaranteed a position in the all-German control council equal to that of the political parties of the Western zone.¹² This concept was surprisingly similar to the national fronts utilized throughout Europe, a fact which did not escape the Western foreign ministers. Thus, one realizes that Stalin was willing to allow German reunification, but only if he could easily dominate the new Germany. In other words, a government not necessarily communist, but one that was well represented by those who would protect Soviet interests.

Prior to their meeting, the Anglo-American bizonal agreements to combine their zones for economic reasons were announced. Stalin may have seen in this agreement, the beginning of a West German state closely allied with the West. He no doubt preferred a weak unified Germany to a divided Germany in which the western half would ally its significant industrial capabilities with the West. Therefore, it is not surprising that Stalin took

¹¹James H. Wolfe, Indivisible Germany Illusion or Reality, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), pp. 53-54.

¹²J.K. Sowden, The German Question 1945-1973, (London: Bradford University Press, 1975), p. 118; "Germany's Political Structure", New Times No. 13 (Mar 28, 1947), pp. 1-2.

a conciliatory approach in talks with Secretary of State Marshall and expressed a willingness to compromise as the then American Ambassador to the Soviet Union reports:

It was possible, he said that, no great success would be achieved at this session, but he thought that compromises were possible on all the main issues, including the demilitarization of Germany, its political structures, reparations and economic unity. It was necessary to have patience, and not become pessimistic.¹³

Although Stalin was conciliatory, Molotov was anything but conciliatory and refused to compromise on the question of reparations. He demanded that the economic merger of the British and American zones be abrogated and that the Soviets be given the right to partake in the control of the Ruhr. Molotov continued to insist upon ten billion dollars in reparations, but refused to divulge information concerning Soviet reparations already taken from the Soviet zone.¹⁴

Therefore, reparations continued to be the driving force in the Soviet attitude toward the German Question.

¹³Walter Bedell Smith, My Three Years in Moscow, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1950), pp. 221-222.

¹⁴Smith, Moscow, pp. 221-222; "The Ruhr Problem" New Times No. 16 (April 18, 1947), p. 2; "The Soviet Union's Just Reparations Demands", New Times No. 14 (April 4, 1947) pp. 1-2.

It appears that Stalin's best case scenario was a weak neutral Germany vulnerable to Soviet pressure. He may have been willing to compromise in 1947, but for the time being the reparations issue was more important than resolving the German Question.

C. Soviet Occupation: A Policy of Paradox

As mentioned earlier, Stalin's maximum objective with respect to the German Question was the formation of a weak unified Germany with at least partial Soviet control of the Ruhr. However, in the event that Stalin's maximum objective could not be attained, the Soviets were carefully laying the groundwork to insure that their minimum object, the Sovietization of the Eastern Zone, would be.¹⁵

Long before the cessation of hostilities, the Soviets were sending into Germany, German emigre Communists to establish administrative rule. Among those sent was Walter Ulbricht, who was later to become the leader of East Germany. As early as June 1945 political parties, which were manipulated by the

¹⁵Griffith, Ostpolitik, p. 38.

Soviets, were allowed to exist.¹⁶

In addition to establishing local administrative government and political organizations first, the Soviets began forming the national government long before the West even considered forming the Federal Republic. As early as 1946 when the five regional governments had formally received their constitution, the SED had already published their draft constitution for the German Democratic Republic, as it was already being called by the Soviet authorities.¹⁷

Not only were the Soviets busily constructing the political framework for a Communist East German state, they were also hurriedly establishing East German military and paramilitary organizations. According to James Wolfe it was the Soviets, not the West which initiated the remilitarization of Germany:

For their part the Soviets had begun early in 1948 to organize paramilitary East German forces known as *Bereitschaften* or alert forces. By April 1949, these troops were estimated to number 20,000 in addition to regular police formations. In reality the

¹⁶Michael Freund, From Cold War to Ostpolitik, trans. R.W. Last, (London: Oswald Wolf, 1972), p. 21; Sowden, German Question, p. 103.

¹⁷Sowden, German Question, p. 117.

Western program to rearm the Federal Republic was a repetition of a similar Soviet policy in the East Zone.¹⁸

This force was composed of former Wehrmacht soldiers commanded by such Spanish Civil War veterans as Wilhelm Zaisser, who was the infamous General Gomez, and Heinz Hoffman. Both of these generals, like many of the civilian leaders, received their training in Moscow. This so called police force was predominantly mobile with a sizable armored force including T34 tanks. By 1951, this force had grown to 65,000 strong. A quarter of these troops were officers, thereby facilitating a quick expansion if necessary.¹⁹

While the Soviets were deliberately constructing a Sovietized East Germany, they were also in the process of systematically dismantling and looting their zone. According to one observer, the Soviets took the equivalent of 17.6 billion dollars out of East Germany in goods, produce, machinery, and dismantled factories. This was 7.6 billion dollars more than they had demanded at Potsdam and the subsequent Foreign Ministers'

¹⁸Wolfe, Indivisible, pp. 55-56.

¹⁹Alistair Horne, Return to Power, (New York: Praeger, 1956), pp. 22-25.

meetings.²⁰

The Soviet dismantling and looting of the Eastern zone was so flagrant and extensive that it not only alienated the Western allies, international public opinion, and potential German supporters, but it also undermined the viability of the East German regime and destroyed whatever legitimacy it might have had.²¹

Thus, just as reparations took precedence over resolving the German Question with their former allies, the Soviets' reparations policy undermined the very political organizations the Soviets had established to reach their minimal objective: the Sovietization of East Germany.

²⁰Mansfield, Problem of German Unity, p. 93.

²¹peter Nettl, "German Reparations in the Soviet Empire," Foreign Affairs, Jan. 1951, p. 307.

D. Internal Soviet Debate on the German Question

In the opinion of Adam Ulam, the Soviet policy makers were in a quandary of how to resolve the German Question until 1950.²² A recent study by Gavriel D. Ra'anan lends credence to Ulam's view. For according to this author, there were two factions in the politburo diametrically opposed on how to resolve the German Question.²³

One faction led by Zhdanov was for the continued Soviet military presence in Germany and the creation of a viable Communist East German state. Accordingly, Zhdanov and his supporters were against excessive reparations which created economic shortages, unemployment and other problems.²⁴

The other faction led by Malenkov and Beria had resigned itself to the inevitable reunification of Germany. Therefore, according to their reasoning, it was imperative that Germany become as weak as possible, so it would never again pose a threat to the Soviet

²²Ulam, Expansion, p. 440.

²³Gavriel D. Ra'anan, International Policy Formation in the USSR, Chamden, Conn.: Archon, 1983), pp. 87-94.

²⁴Ibid; pp. 93-94.

Union. This would be accomplished by a dismantling of the entire East German industrial infra-structure as soon as possible. They argued that, not only would this policy denude German military capability, but it would also help rebuild the Soviet Union.²⁵ Walter Ulbricht's speech attacking Beria in 1961 confirms this thesis.²⁶

Where did Stalin stand in this debate? According to Ra'anan, he was not yet committed:

Stalin appears to have preferred a middle road viewing occupation as a chance to strengthen the USSR (through Reparations) and to push Poland westward while catering up to a point, to nationalism-contradictory as these aims might be. Stalin, unlike the Zhdanovites, however continued to look towards German reunification rather than creation of a separatist East German state.²⁷

Stalin probably preferred a neutral Germany over even a reunified Communist Germany, for a Communist Germany would have been difficult to control and might have rivaled the Soviet Union for the leadership of the world communist movement.²⁸

²⁵Ibid; pp. 88-89.

²⁶Wolfe, Indivisible, p. 102.

²⁷Ra'anan, Policy Formation, p. 89.

²⁸Griffith, Ostpolitik, pp. 32-34.

Therefore, the Soviets were not deliberately following a well planned scheme to communize Germany. On the contrary, they were following policies, which in many ways were contradictory. Finally, there appears to have been a great deal of dissension among the Soviet leadership on how to resolve the German Question.

E. The Berlin Crisis of 1948

Why did Stalin impose the blockade on Berlin in the summer of 1948? What were his objectives? To answer these questions, one must first look at what was happening on the geopolitical scene. The Marshall Plan had been in effect for over a year and the economy of the western zone was beginning to show signs of life. Western resolve had not weakened as Stalin had hoped, for American troops were still in Germany and the Truman Doctrine had prevented Communist takeover in Greece and Turkey. Stalin had failed in his attempt to discipline Tito, and Yugoslavia had broken with the Soviet Union.

Finally, despite Soviet demands and overtures the West was continuing with its plans to form a West German state. Out of the London Conference in June 1948 came the following measures to strengthen the economy and to facilitate self-government of the Western Zone: the

Anglo-American bizonal merger with the French zone, the creation of an international authority to control coal and steel production in the Ruhr, and finally the granting to the provisional government the right to draft a constitution.²⁹

Perhaps, Stalin initiated the Berlin crisis because he felt he needed a dramatic victory to offset the string of Western successes and Tito's heresy. But then, Stalin was anything but an impetuous man. He only gambled when he thought the bet was a sure thing. In the case of Berlin, he thought he had all the cards, for as the American ambassador to Moscow at that time relates:

Neither Stalin nor Molotov believed that the airlift could supply Berlin. They must have felt sure that cold and hunger and the depressingly short gloomy days of the Berlin winter would destroy the Berlin population and create such a completely unmanageable situation that the Western allies would have to capitulate and vacate the city.³⁰

In his book, Conversations With Stalin, the Yugoslav Milovan Djilas relates a conversation he had with Stalin in Moscow in January 1948:

²⁹James P. Warburg, Germany Key To Peace, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), pp. 63-65.

³⁰Smith, Moscow, p. 253.

Both that night and again soon after in a meeting with the Bulgarian and Yugoslav delegation, Stalin stressed that Germany would remain divided: 'The West will make Western Germany their own, and we shall turn Eastern Germany into our own state'.³¹

Thus, one may be inclined to feel that Stalin's objective in initiating the Berlin crisis was to drive the West out of Berlin and thereby solidify the Eastern regime. This no doubt was an objective, but the minimal objective.

Stalin's maximal objective was to prevent the formation of a West German government, that would be closely allied with the West, for during negotiations to resolve the crisis, Molotov demanded the postponement of the establishment of a West German government as a precondition for the lifting of the blockade.³² The attainment of either objective would have been a bitter blow to Western prestige, greatly weakened the morale of the West Germans and may have convinced a majority of West Germans to seek accommodation with the Soviets. The above no doubt was a corollary aim of their German policy.

³¹Milovan Djilas, Conversations with Stalin, trans. Michael B. Petrovich (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1962), p. 153.

³²Smith, Moscow, p. 247.

F. Soviet Notes of '52: Ready to Compromise?

Before one can examine the flurry of Soviet diplomacy in the early fifties culminating with the notes of March and April 1952, one must examine several new sources of Soviet diplomacy. The new Federal Republic had ratified a constitution and elected as its leader the ardent anti-communist Konrad Adenauer. The West had formed NATO, while the North Koreans had initiated the conflict in Korea. In response to the Korean War and Adenauer's disclosure of evidence reporting the formation of East German paramilitary organizations, Adenauer was allowed to establish mobile police units.³³ Shortly thereafter, the West began to look for ways to integrate the Federal Republic into the defense of Europe.

Stalin's fears of the western part of a divided Germany with the stronger industrial base and military potential becoming an ally of the West was indeed becoming true. To prevent the formation of NATO, an European Defense Community, and the rearmament of West Germany, the Soviet Union began a diplomatic offensive calling for the reunification of Germany.

³³Sowden, German Question, pp. 140-141.

This diplomatic offensive included such proposals as the Prague proclamation, the two Grotewohl initiatives, and the Soviet proposals of 1950 and 1951. All of these called for the demilitarization of West Germany, a return to the spirit of Potsdam, and the formation of an all German government, either along the lines of a confederation or a national front.

All of these overtures were conspicuous in that none of them called for elections. The Soviets in their note of 1947 had been the first power to propose elections, but since then they had failed to even mention them.³⁴ If the Soviets were sincere about German unity, they would have allowed free elections or so argued the Western leaders. The Soviets had failed to respond to Western notes calling for national elections and refused to allow the United Nations commission to study the feasibility of an election there. Therefore, the Western leaders reasoned, the Soviets were not really sincere about a united free Germany.³⁵

³⁴Mansfield, p. 64.

³⁵Terence Prittie, Adenauer, (London: Tom Stacey, 1972), p. 241.

However, on 10 March 1952, the Soviets disclosed their now famous note calling for a neutral non-aligned Germany. The Soviet plan would allow Germany to have the necessary military means to defend itself, but would not allow it to enter any alliances. In addition, a peace treaty would have to be concluded recognizing the Oder-Neisse line.³⁶ Shortly thereafter, the Soviets stipulated that free elections would precede reunification. However, these elections would be controlled by the Four Power Commission, not by the United Nations.³⁷

How sincere was this proposal? According to many scholars, it was merely a Soviet ploy to prevent or delay West German rearmament, and disrupt the negotiations concerning the European Defense Community.³⁸ This no doubt was the primary objective but there is some evidence that Stalin was willing to compromise and let his East German state be incorporated

³⁶"Soviet Govt. Draft of Peace Treaty with Germany," Pravda (Mar. 11, 1952) in Current Digest of the Sov. Press, Vol. IV-7 (Mar. 29, 1952), pp. 7-8.

³⁷"Soviet Govt.'s Note of April 9, 1952", Pravda (April 11, 1952) in Current Digest of the Sov Press, Vol. IV-13 (May 10, 1952), pp. 3-4.

³⁸Griffith, Ostpolitik, p. 55; Richard Hiscocks, The Adenauer Era, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1966), p. 260; Prittie, Adenauer, p. 241.

into a neutral nonaligned Germany.

For the first time since 1947, the Soviets had offered to hold elections prior to reunification. The West claimed that because these elections would not be supervised by the U.N., they would not have been free in the Soviet Zone. This was no doubt true, but given the vastly inferior population of the East, the communist party (S.E.D.) would have failed to receive a plurality. Stalin must have realized this.

As mentioned previously, there was a vocal faction in the Soviet leadership who were willing to let East Germany be absorbed by the West in exchange for neutrality and non-alignment. Finally, Stalin would have gained a great deal strategically, for he would have isolated West Germany militarily.³⁹

Another example of the possible willingness for the Soviets to compromise was the conciliatory attitude displayed by Otto Grotewohl, leader of the GDR, after Adenauer had rejected his second proposal. While Adenauer was in process of rejecting this proposal, he submitted a Fourteen point plan for all-German elections.

In a speech to the East German parliament (Volkskammer), Grotewohl replied that he found most of

³⁹Wolfe, Indivisible, p. 69.

the fourteen points submitted by Adenauer as acceptable. The several points which he found fault with could be resolved through all-German consultations. Adenauer also rejected this plea for negotiations, citing the same reasons that he had rejected the initial Grotewohl proposal.⁴⁰ Three times, the East German leader had proposed a forum for an all-German discussion, twice he had modified this proposal and each time he was turned down.

While the Soviets had launched a diplomatic offensive to short circuit West German rearmament, they also took a slightly different approach in their dealings with East Germany. In 1950, they diminished drastically reparations coming out of the GDR.⁴¹ During that same year they took steps to integrate the GDR into the Soviet economic bloc by admitting it to COMECON.⁴² In other words, Stalin was taking steps to insure the survival of the Eastern regime.

Not only was Stalin taking steps to make the East German regime more viable, but he was also continuing to take steps to insure it survived by force if necessary.

⁴⁰Sowden, Question, p. 146.

⁴¹Nettl, Reparations, p. 307.

⁴²A. Yerusalimsky, "A Turning Point in Europe's History", New Times No. 40 (October 18, 1950) p. 13.

When one reads the following excerpt from Alistair Horne's Return to Power, one begins to doubt the credibility of the Soviet proposals:

At the end of 1952, before one single West German had been recruited, the figures published by the Foreign Office showed that more than 100,000 East Germans were already under arms. A fully trained three division strong Army Corps had already been established at Parewalk in the north, equipped with 350 tanks and 200 guns.⁴³

In response to the mass migration from the East to the West, the Soviets moved in the summer of 1952 to completely close off the Eastern Zone from West Germany. Was this in response to the West's rejection of the 1952 proposals or had it been planned all along?⁴⁴

I believe Stalin was simply following a two track policy in regard to the German Question in the early 50's. His maximal objective was a neutral non-aligned Germany which would be vulnerable to Soviet pressure, thus the flurry of Soviet and East German diplomatic overtures. His minimal objective was a Sovietized East Germany. Therefore, he took steps to solidify the communist regime there, while simultaneously pursuing a contradictory diplomacy.

⁴³Horne, Power, p. 25.

⁴⁴Sowden, Question, p. 148.

CHAPTER III

SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS THE GERMAN QUESTION DURING
THE KHRUSHCHEV ERA

Throughout the 1950's the German Question continued to dominate East-West relations. The Soviet policy makers Molotov, Bulganin, and Khrushchev met Western leaders Eden, Bidault and Dulles on numerous occasions in places like Berlin and Geneva in the attempt to solve the vexing question of German partition. Countless notes and subtle diplomatic messages passed back and forth between the Soviet elites and their Western counterparts. In addition, the Soviets presented their many various proposals to solve the German Question at public functions (party congresses), through the media (Radio Moscow), and the press (Pravda).

Despite the myriad of proposals, counter proposals, threats, pleas and the countless hours of negotiations and debate, neither side was any closer to resolving the question at the end of the decade than they were when Josef Stalin left the scene in 1953. After the building of the Berlin Wall during the summer of 1961, the question of German reunification ceased to be in foreground of East-West confrontation, competition, and attempted cooperation. It had become an implicitly closed question.

What then was the function of the exhaustive Soviet diplomacy concerning the German Question during the 1950's? Did the Soviet policy makers after Stalin ever seriously consider a reunified neutral Germany instead of the divided status quo? Was the Austrian State Treaty a model for German reunification as some observers have claimed? Or were the Soviet proposals devices to neutralize the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) while simultaneously strengthening the precarious Communist regime in the German Democratic Republic (GDR)?

This chapter, which will be an analysis of the Soviet Union's policy towards the German Question after Stalin's death until the building of the Berlin Wall, will attempt to answer these questions. In the process of this analysis, I will discuss the following: the implications of the Soviet succession crisis and the Berlin riots of 1953, West German rearmament and reunification, the Soviet position after the ratification of the Paris accords, the implications of the Austrian State Treaty, the disengagement and confederational proposals from 1956 until 1958, the implications of the Sino-Soviet rift and the second Berlin crisis.

A. In the Wake of Stalin: A Chance For A Deal?

According to several observers, Winston Churchill

was convinced in 1953 that the collective leadership that had succeeded Stalin was ready to compromise on the German Question. During Konrad Adenauer's May 1953 visit to England, Churchill explained to the West German Chancellor that he considered the Soviet peace feelers as genuine and if Adenauer was willing to compromise on the Eastern border a reunified Germany was a distinct possibility.¹

Former Assistant Secretary of State Walt Rostow pointed out several examples of conciliatory Soviet actions that may have suggested that the Soviets were willing to compromise on the German Question. On March 21, 1953 the Soviets vigorously backed the Korean War wounded prisoners of war exchange program after having ignored this program the previous fifteen months. The Soviets committed another about face when the Soviet delegation to the United Nations accepted Dag Hammarskjold as the new Secretary-General after a long impasse.² One must remember, however, that there were

¹Willy Brandt, People and Politics, trans. J. Maxwell Brownjohn (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1978), p. 29, and William E. Griffith, The Ostpolitik of the Federal Republic of Germany (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1978), p. 68.

²W.W. Rostow, Europe After Stalin (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), pp. 46-47.

sufficient reasons for the Soviet to do the above regardless of the German Question. Rostow's point, though, that overall Soviet policy was now conciliatory, is well taken.

Rostow also cited the Soviet moves to end the Korean conflict and a series of conciliatory speeches made by the new Premier Malenkov. On March 16, 1953, just six days after Stalin's funeral, Malenkov might have been referring to the German Question when he made the following remarks:

At the present time there is no disputed or unresolved question that cannot be settled peacefully by mutual agreement of the interested countries. This applies to our relations with all states including the United States of America.³

The American ambassador to the Soviet Union at that time, Charles Bohlen, stated in his memoirs that the collective leadership under Malenkov may have been ready to compromise on the German Question:

Looking back, I believe I was remiss at the time of Stalin's death in not recommending that Eisenhower take up Churchill's call for a 'meeting of the summit' (a new term then) with Malenkov

After the death of Stalin, there might have been opportunities for an adjustment of the outstanding questions particularly regarding Germany. In addition to the extraordinary act

³Malenkov as quoted in Rostow, Europe After Stalin, pp. 46-47.

of Pravda's publishing the text of a speech by President Eisenhower calling for peace, the Soviet press let up on its hysterical Hate America campaign. ... Instead of 'down with the warmonger' and reference to 'imperialist aggression' and foreign usurpers', there were expressions of confidence in the ability to resolve all differences between the nations. Soon after his assumption of power, Malenkov himself said in a statement that there were no issues that could not be negotiated.⁴

According to Gavriel D. Ra'anan, Malenkov belonged to the Beria faction during the late 1940's that had favored a severe reparations policy toward the Eastern Zone. This faction preferred this policy because they had felt reunification was inevitable.⁵ Malenkov, who was an advocate of increased consumer industries to the detriment of heavy industries, may have thought that the process of consolidating the GDR was an economic sacrifice the Soviets should not bear.

Nikita Khrushchev's speech in 1963 denouncing Beria fueled speculation about a possible move discussed in the Soviet politburo circles in 1953 to let the East German regime go in exchange for a neutral reunified Germany. The following is an excerpt:

Already in the first few days following Stalin's death Beria began to take steps to

⁴Charles E. Bohlen, Witness to History 1929-1969, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1973), p. 371.

⁵Gavriel D. Ra'anan, International Policy Formation in the USSR, (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1983), pp. 88-89.

disorganize the work of the party and to undermine the Soviet Union's friendly relations with fraternal countries of the socialist camp. For instance, he and Malenkov came out with the provocative proposal to liquidate the German Democratic Republic as a socialist state, to recommend to the Socialist Unity Party of Germany to abandon the slogan of the struggle to build socialism. The Central Committee promptly rejected these traitorous proposals with indignation and administered a crushing rebuff to the provocateurs.⁶

One might dismiss Khrushchev's disparaging remarks as simply an opportunity to denounce an old bitter rival. However, further evidence corroborates his accusation. Shortly after Beria's fall, the leader of the East German Socialist Unity Party (SED), Walter Ulbricht, bitterly denounced Beria at a plenum of the Soviet Central Committee for "having wanted to sell out the German Democratic Republic in the negotiations with the West."⁷

In January 1953 the economic situation in the GDR was on the brink of disaster. This situation was partially caused by the loss of skilled workers to the West, frequent bottlenecks in supplies and irrational decisions on the part of ill-trained planners and

⁶Khrushchev as quoted in Frederick H. Hartmann Germany Between East and West (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1965), p. 70.

⁷Brandt, People and Politics, p. 29.

managers.⁸ In response a "new course" was imposed by the Soviets on the GDR slightly liberalizing the regime. This move to liberalize the regime was resisted by Walter Ulbricht. Consequently, there was reportedly to have been talk in the politburo of the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) of removing Ulbricht.⁹

Apparently there was also a faction in the SED that favored liberalization in the GDR and reunification with the FRG. The leaders of this faction were Wilhelm Zaisser, the minister of State Security and Rudolf Herrenstadt, the editor of the East German daily Neues Deutschland.¹⁰

According to two high level East German defectors, the liberalization policies pushed by Zaisser and Herrenstadt were meant to make the GDR more respectable in an attempt to entice the FRG to all-German negotiations and to prepare East Germany for eventual reunification. The fact that Zaisser was a protege of Beria also gives credence to the theory that Beria was willing to make substantial concessions to the West on

⁸ J.K. Sowden, The German Question 1945-1973 (London: Bradford University Press, 1975), p. 152.

⁹ Brandt, People and Politics, p. 29, and Griffith, Ostpolitik, pp. 63-64.

¹⁰ Ferenc A. Vali, The Quest For a United Germany (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), pp. 160-161.

the German Question.¹¹

The Soviet move to liberalize the GDR may have been nothing more than part of the new Soviet trend to deStalinize Eastern Europe. The fact that Khrushchev like Malenkov and Beria supported the "New Course"¹², casts doubt upon the hypothesis that the "New Course" was intended to prepare the GDR for eventual reunification. Rather it suggests that this new policy was mandated to strengthen the East German regime.

Until the Soviet archives are opened up, one cannot say with any certainty that the Soviet leadership, during the immediate post-Stalin era, was willing to accept a neutral reunified Germany. The evidence does show that the Soviet elite during this period did not have a firm clear cut policy concerning German reunification, rather they were in the process of searching for a credible stance.

Whether or not the Soviets were ready to grant significant concessions was made moot by the events of June 17, 1953 in East Germany. The workers' protest that originated in East Berlin quickly spread to such cities as Magdeburg, Halle, Erfurt, and Leipzig. The local workers' protest had quickly become a spontaneous

¹¹Rostow, Europe After Stalin, p. 71.

¹²Griffith, Ostpolitik, p. 63.

revolt against the regime. The Soviet leadership realizing that the SED had lost control of the situation, intervened with the Red Army, which quickly crushed the revolt.¹³

In the aftermath of the revolt a conciliatory Soviet gesture concerning the German Question might have been interpreted as a sign of weakness as J.K. Sowden surmised in the following passage:

A withdrawal from East Germany under such circumstances would appear as a compulsory retreat in the face of an enraged population whose sympathies lay with Western capitalism. It would have been a confession of weakness, and not as originally intended -- a gesture of willingness for a detente.¹⁴

Shortly after the revolt was crushed, Beria was removed from the politburo and summarily executed. In addition, Ulbricht was allowed to retain his leadership of the SED, while the proponents of the "New Course" were purged, although not executed.¹⁵

In August of 1953 the Soviets in conjunction with the GDR announced a plan that significantly altered the Soviet-East German relationship and implied that the Soviets were now moving toward a position consolidating the Communist regime in the East, rather than initiating

¹³Sowden, German Question, p. 152.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 152-153.

¹⁵Vali, Quest, pp. 160-161.

proposals for a neutral reunified Germany. The Soviets not only offered to cancel the remaining reparations of the GDR, but also extended credits and financial grants to the East German regime. Although the GDR had been a member of the CMEA since 1948, it was not until 1953 that the Soviets made their push to incorporate the GDR into the Communist bloc economically.¹⁶

In the official Soviet work on Soviet foreign policy, Andrei Gromyko also pointed out the new Soviet attitude, although he failed to consider the causal effect of the Berlin workers' riots:

At these talks the Soviet government declared that as of January 1, 1954 it would cease collecting reparations in any form. This decision freed the German Democratic Republic from paying the remaining reparations valued at 2,537 million dollars on January 1, 1954. (The total reparations due to the Soviet Union at 10,000 million dollars.) The Soviet Union turned over gratuitously to the German Democratic Republic 33 large German factories that had earlier passed to USSR ownership as reparations and cut back the expenditures on the maintenance of Soviet troops on its territory.¹⁷

¹⁶Don L. Mansfield, Soviet Foreign Policy and the Problem of German Unity (San Francisco: S.F. State College, 1965), p. 95.

¹⁷Andrei Gromyko and B.N. Ponomarev eds. Soviet Foreign Policy Vol. II 1945-1980 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1981), p. 182.

The new Soviet relationship with the GDR, however, did not foreclose Soviet consideration of a neutral reunified Germany as a viable option. The new economic relationship could have been construed not only to consolidate the GDR but also to encourage the goodwill of the East German elite in the event of a neutral reunified Germany.

In short, the conciliatory gestures on the part of the collective leadership after Stalin's death suggest that the Soviets might have been ready to compromise in 1953. Unsure of their hold domestically after 30 years of Stalin, searching for a comfortable collective formula for ruling, the Soviets might have been willing to the compromise on terms favorable to the West. This coupled with the fact that there is some evidence that a faction in the politburo considered the GDR a political and economic liability makes the above reasoning plausible and suggests the Soviets were at least not yet committed to the consolidation of the East German regime.

After the demise of Beria and the Soviet intervention in the worker riots, the Soviet line appeared to have hardened on the German Question, at least temporarily. Additionally, the relationship between the Soviet Union and the GDR had fundamentally changed from

one of economic exploitation to one of economic subsidization to shore up the East German regime.

B. German Rearmament, NATO Integration and Reunification

According to Willy Brandt the West missed their last real opportunity to effect reunification when the Western leadership squandered a chance at a summit with their Soviet counterparts shortly after Stalin's death.¹⁸ What then were the various Soviet proposals calling for the reunification of Germany in 1954 and the early part of 1955? Were they simply tactical maneuvers to delay or prevent the ratification of first the EDC (European Defense Community) and then NATO as Konrad Adenauer claimed?¹⁹ In the attempt to answer these questions, one needs to take a closer look at the Soviet proposals and reactions vis-a-vis Western attempts to successfully integrate West Germany into a Western defensive alliance.

At the Berlin Foreign Ministers conference of the four powers, it quickly became apparent that the Soviets and the West were at an impasse. The basic difference between the two was the timing of the all-German

¹⁸Brandt, People and Politics, p. 28.

¹⁹Richard Hiscocks, The Adenauer Era (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1966), p. 260.

elections -- before or after the formation of an all German government.²⁰

Anthony Eden presented the Western plan calling for internationally supervised free all-German elections. Molotov rejected the Eden plan claiming that the elections would not be free due to Western interference. Molotov warned that the Eden plan would "lead to new dangerous ventures on the part of German militarists" because of the large number of militarists and monopolistic forces in the FRG.²¹

Shortly thereafter, Molotov presented his plan calling for the formation of an all-German government with equal representation from both Germanies. This provisional government would carry out all German "democratic" elections if the conditions warranted it. The Molotov plan also called for the withdrawal of foreign troops except token contingents. Germany would be prohibited from joining a military alliance, but would be allowed to have a national army for internal and border security and air defense.²²

²⁰Sowden, German Question, pp. 153-158.

²¹V.M. Molotov, "The Road to German Unification", New Times, No. 7 (Feb. 13, 1954), p. 4.

²²Hartmann, Between East and West, p. 62 and Molotov, "Road", pp. 5-8.

This plan was rejected by the West because of the sequence of elections and because the West claimed that a reunified Germany should have the right to join an alliance. Looking back one can understand Western reservations. Without an American military presence the FRG could have been easily dominated by the Soviet or East German security forces. The East German security forces had considerable armor and mechanized forces, along with 60 jet fighters. The FRG, on the other hand, had little more than a large police force.²³

Barring the use of force or political blackmail backed by force, the East German regime could have sabotaged the all German talks at any stage. Thus, the Soviets could have neutralized the FRG without giving up the GDR. In addition, the GDR would have received implicit recognition and sovereignty by the West agreeing that the GDR could negotiate on equal terms with the FRG.

One can also find fault with the West for not fully probing Soviet intentions. The Western statesmen realized, as Anthony Eden pointed out in his memoirs, that one of the Soviet objectives was to prevent West

²³Hartmann, Between East and West, p. 63.

German integration into a Western defensive system.²⁴ Why then did the West insist that a reunified Germany be allowed to join NATO? They must have realized that the Soviets, given their extreme fears about security, would not give up East Germany so it could join an alliance directed at the Soviet Union!

In a final attempt to break the deadlock, Molotov proposed the first Soviet collective security plan. Under this plan the Four Powers would be withdrawn in six months. However "in the event that a threat to security in either part should arise" the powers would have the right to return to their respective zones.²⁵ Obviously, because of the Soviet Union's close proximity, this would have greatly favored the Soviets. Finally, the plan proposed a collective security treaty in which all European nations including both Germanies could sign. This plan, which excluded the United States, did not provide for the reunification of Germany. Accordingly it was rejected by the West.

The Berlin Conference ended in a deadlock, but on March 31st the Soviet restated their collective security proposal allowing American participation. In fact,

²⁴Anthony Eden, Full Circle (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1960), p. 65.

²⁵Ibid.

Molotov stated that the Soviet Union was willing to join NATO. This was immediately rejected as ludicrous, for the Soviets could have easily disrupted the organization.²⁶

Of more importance six days earlier on March 25th, the Soviets stated that they were ready to declare the sovereignty of the GDR, thus making the question of reunification strictly a matter between the two Germanies.²⁷

Unable to neutralize West Germany through negotiations with the three Western Powers, the Soviets resorted to political pressure and propaganda. The target of these Soviet tactics was France on the hopes that the French Parliament would reject the EDC. Typical of the Soviet attempts to play on French fears is the following excerpt from Pravda:

France is once again threatened with the rebirth of her old enemy -- German militarism. The enemies of France maintain that she has no choice but to agree either to a 'European Army' headed by Bonn revanchists or to plan for outright restoration of a West German Wehrmacht.²⁸

²⁶Sowden, German Question, pp. 157-158; and "In the Interest of Strengthening Universal Peace," Pravda (April 2, 1954) in CDSR Vol. VI-13 (May 12, 1954) p. 22.

²⁷"Statement of the Sov. Govt. on Relations Between the Soviet Union and the GDR", New Times, No. 13 (Mar. 27, 1954) p. 1.

²⁸"A Choice for France", Current Digest of Soviet Press Vol. VI-32 (September 22, 1954).

On this issue perceived French interests coincided with Soviet ones, for on August 30th, 1954, the French National Assembly voted against the Paris Agreements calling for the formation of the European Defense Community. When one considered this development in conjunction with the Soviet statement of 25 March proclaiming that reunification was now a matter to be settled between the two Germanies, it appeared as if the Soviet position had hardened and that the Soviets were no longer interested in a neutral reunified Germany.

The Soviet position dramatically softened when the Paris and London Agreements, which brought the FRG into the Western European Union and NATO as a sovereign nation, were signed on October 23, 1954.²⁹ Even before the conference broke up on the 23rd, the Soviets sent a note to the Western Powers, displaying a new willingness to compromise. The Soviet note restated its previous proposal for a security pact, but also said that the Soviets were willing to discuss reunification.³⁰ More importantly the Soviets were now willing to discuss the

²⁹Mansfield, Soviet Foreign Policy, p. 72.

³⁰Sven Allard, Russia and the Austrian State Treaty (University Park: Penn State U. Press, 1970), p. 135.

Eden plan for free elections as the following passage from Pravda showed:

In order to restore German unity, the Soviet government, as before, considers it necessary to hold free-all German elections, in which the German people will have the opportunity to freely express their desire for a united peace-loving and democratic Germany.³¹

Coupled with the Soviet plans for a new foreign ministers' meeting were such warnings as Molotov stating that "remilitarizing West Germany would mean the dismemberment of Germany for many years to come."³²

When the West ignored these offerings, the Soviets tried again on November 13th, when they invited all the European nations and the United States to an international conference to establish a collective security system. This invitation was coupled with the usual caveats stating West German entry into NATO would preclude reunification. The Soviets also implied that they were considering their own military bloc in the event the Paris Accords were ratified:

If the Western Powers reject the proposed conference on setting up a European collective security system and strive to fulfill the

³¹"For Lasting Peace and Collective Security For All European Peoples", Pravda (Oct. 25, 1954) in Current Digest of the Soviet Press Vol. VI-43 (Dec. 8, 1954), p. 17.

³²Sowden, German Question, p. 158.

Paris agreement, peace-loving European peoples will not be reconciled to this and will consider new and necessary means to insure their security and their defense.³³

Despite the Soviet diplomatic and propaganda efforts, the French ratified the Paris and London Accords. Thus, in what many have viewed as an eleventh hour gamble to prevent the West German Bundestag from ratifying the Paris Accords, the Soviets released their now famous "Statement on the German Question" on January 15, 1955.

In this note, the Soviets further softened their position by indicating that the international supervision of all-German elections might be possible if the two German governments could reach an agreement.³⁴ The Soviets also issued the now familiar warning stating that ratification would preclude reunification:

Ratification of the Paris agreement is incompatible with Germany's reunification as a peace loving state ... If the Paris agreements are ratified the Bundestag will assume grave responsibility for perpetuating the division of Germany.³⁵

³³"New Stage in Struggle For Collective Security in Europe", Pravda (November 16, 1954) in Current Digest of the Soviet Press Vol. VII-46 (Dec. 29, 1954), p. 18.

³⁴Wolfram Hanrieder, West German Foreign Policy 1949-1963 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), p. 75.

³⁵"Soviet Government's statement on the German Question" Pravda (Jan. 16, 1955) in Current Digest of Soviet Press Vol. VII-3 (March 2, 1955), p. 23.

One observer noted that the January 15 note was the "Soviets' best offer before or since."³⁶ A large segment of the West German population including the Social Democrats (SPD) led by Erich Ollenhauer were quite receptive to the plan.³⁷

However, one must look at the fine print. While the Soviet note offered some promising possibilities, it also offered the usual escape clauses. For example, the note called for an all-German commission to draw up an electoral law which would be "drafted with due regard for the electoral laws of the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic."³⁸ How does one reconcile the conflicting laws of the FRG with the GDR?³⁹ The possibilities for Soviet and East German mischief and pretexts for aborting the All-German talks are limitless. This becomes even more illuminating when one considers the discussion the Swedish ambassador to Austria Sven Allard had with a Soviet diplomat in 1955.

Allard asked the diplomat, whom he referred to as

³⁶Hartmann, Between East and West, p. 69.

³⁷Gromyko, Soviet Foreign Policy, p. 187.

³⁸Hartmann, Between East and West, p. 69.

³⁹Ibid.

L. for reasons of confidentiality, if the Soviets would really allow free elections in the East if the West would not rearm West Germany and the FRG would agree to neutralization. L. said "yes" and that elections would be by "Western Standards". Allard then asked if the Soviets were willing to forego their occupation of East Germany in return for the disarmament of the FRG. L. answered, "That result is not so certain."⁴⁰

L. then added that the recent elections in Soviet zone had been free by Western standards, but the elections in West Berlin had not been free. These elections had taken place under heavy pressure from the American forces. L. reasoned that the West Berlin masses had voted against the Communist Party even though they realized that Communism was a superior social system. Because the people had voted against Communism, the elections were obviously not free.⁴¹

Allard therefore concluded that, given the sophistic Soviet interpretation of free elections, the Soviet offer of free elections was a sham to prevent or

⁴⁰Allard, Austrian State Treaty, p. 153.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 159.

delay the ratifications of the Paris Accords.⁴² Another possible Soviet trap was "appropriate international supervision".⁴³ The Soviets also failed to enumerate what this would entail. Acceptance of the Soviet offer would have also meant at least de facto recognition of the GDR. Thus the Soviets could have not only delayed or prevented West German entry into NATO, but also further consolidated the GDR by upgrading its international status. Any time after the opening of the talks, Ulbricht could have broke off negotiations for West German "anti-communist behavior."

This note was also ignored by the West, who under the leadership of Dulles and Adenauer mistakenly assumed that their bargaining position vis-a-vis the Soviets would improve. Given the Soviet rejection of the Eden plan at the Berlin conference, the subsequent hardening of their position, and then the about face after the October Paris Accords, one must be skeptical about the Soviet proposals. The various escape clauses in the official statements combined with the frequent appeals to neutralist sentiment in Western Europe lead one to conclude that the Soviets were minimally trying to delay

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 152-154.

ratification while further consolidating the East German regime. Their maximal aim was to detach the FRG from the Western alliance. The timing of the Soviet notes which corresponded with parliamentary votes in Western Europe also lends credence to this argument. Finally, Allard's discussion with the Soviet diplomat shows how Soviet interpretation of terms could make negotiations very difficult and prolonged.

One must also consider two other facets to the discussion of Soviet objectives concerning German reunification and rearmament -- politburo factionalism. On February 6, 1955 the Soviets made their last proposal concerning the German Question before the German Bundestag vote. This proposal called for the withdrawal of all occupied areas, the holding of all German elections and the guarantee of German neutrality by Europe and the United States. Two days later Malenkov was replaced by Bulganin. On the same day in East Berlin, Molotov gave a blunt speech with the typical warnings that ratification of the accords would preclude reunification, while only giving passing notice to the question of German elections. Was this simply a coincidence or did the removal of Malenkov signify a new Soviet hard line? Frederick Hartmann felt that the

Soviet offers to discuss free elections were pushed by Malenkov.⁴⁴

Thus, Western refusals to discuss these proposals may have further weakened Malenkov's position in the Politburo and helped Khrushchev to consolidate his power by taking a hard line position in an alliance with Molotov vis-a-vis Malenkov. In any event the February offer was the last Soviet offer before the Bundestag vote in May of 1955.

C. The Hardening of the Soviet Position

After the German Bundestag ratified the Paris Accords, the Soviets did not become more conciliatory on the German Question as Adenauer had predicted but more intransigent.⁴⁵ If one examines the Soviet actions after the ratification of the Paris Accords -- at the Geneva summit, during Adenauer's visit to Moscow, and at the foreign minister conference in Geneva, one ascertains a new hardening of the Soviet position on German reunification.

At the Berlin Conference in 1954 the West and the Soviets could not agree on the sequence between

⁴⁴Hartmann, Between East and West, pp. 69-70.

⁴⁵Hanrieder, Foreign Policy, p. 91.

elections and the formation of the government. At the Geneva summit in July of 1955, the divergence between the West and the Soviets was even greater. On one hand, the West still wanted to discuss free elections and then reunification. On the other hand, the Soviets no longer seemed to be interested in negotiations on reunification. They were now primarily concerned with a European security pact.⁴⁶

The new Soviet premier Bulganin highlighted the new Soviet attitude towards reunification in his opening remarks. Bulganin pointed out that because of the Paris Accords, debate on reunification was pointless. He also stated that reunification was unrealistic because the two German states had different economic and social systems. After both Germanies took part in the Soviet security plan, the first step toward reunification would be an inter-German rapprochement. The West rejected this, for it would have neutralized West Germany without effecting reunification. The GDR also would have received an upgraded international status.⁴⁷

In order to placate Soviet fears about security, Anthony Eden offered a security pact that would include

⁴⁶Hartmann, Between East and West, p. 71.

⁴⁷Sowden, German Question, pp. 170-171, and "Statement by N.A. Bulgaria," New Times No. 31 (July 28, 1955) pp. 20-22.

a united Germany, Great Britain, France, the United States and the Soviet Union. Premier Bulganin rejected the Western proposal in calling for a security pact encompassing all of Europe. In an attempt to break this impasse, Eden suggested that the questions of European security and reunification be considered along parallel lines. Bulganin rejected this proposal at first. He later modified the Soviet position agreeing to discuss the two issues at the next foreign minister meeting, thereby ending the summit on a positive note.⁴⁸

If one is to believe Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviets were no longer interested in a reunified neutral Germany at the Geneva summit. Rather they now wanted to perpetuate the division to prevent the incorporation of the GDR into a Germany closely aligned with the West as Khrushchev stated in his memoirs:

But we knew that the number one goal which the English, American, and French would be pursuing in Geneva would be what they called the reunification of Germany which really meant the expulsion of Socialist forces from the German Democratic Republic, in other words, the liquidation of Socialism in the German Democratic Republic, and the creation of a single capitalist Germany which would, no doubt be a member of NATO. As for our position, we wanted simply to sign a peace treaty that would recognize the existence of

⁴⁸Eden, Full Circle, pp. 329-331, p. 339.

two German states and would guarantee that each state be allowed to develop as its own people saw fit.⁴⁹

On his way back to Moscow from the summit, Khrushchev gave a speech in which he stated that an armed West Germany had made reunification impossible. German reunification, he continued, would never be solved at the expense of the GDR workers.⁵⁰

Shortly thereafter the GDR's premier Otto Grotewohl proclaimed that reunification could only come about through direct East and West German contacts.⁵¹ These two speeches also signified the new Soviet intransigence.

Soviet actions during Konrad Adenauer's historic visit to Moscow in September of 1955 also reflected the new Soviet attitude towards reunification and their commitment to a two Germanies policy.

One of Adenauer's main objectives of his trip was to secure the release of 9000 German prisoners of war still incarcerated in the Soviet Union. During the

⁴⁹Nikita Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers trans. Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1970), p. 394.

⁵⁰James H. Wolfe, Indivisible Germany Illusion or Reality? (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), p. 76, and Sowden, German Question, p. 171.

⁵¹"The German Question After Geneva", New Times No. 34 (Aug. 18, 1953), p. 7.

negotiations concerning this question, Bulganin told the West German chancellor that this problem could only be discussed with both German governments present. Because this would have implied diplomatic parity and defacto recognition of the GDR, Adenauer immediately prepared to leave. The Soviets consequently compromised and exchanged the German prisoners for diplomatic relations.⁵²

Besides securing the release of the prisoners, Adenauer came away empty handed. For the Soviets it was a considerable triumph. It further solidified the status quo and upgraded the status of the GDR, vis-a-vis the FRG, for the Soviets had already granted the East German regime sovereignty.

In addition to trying to legitimize the status quo and upgrade the international status of the GDR, other Soviet aims of establishing relations with the FRG were the attainment of economic benefits and the attempted engineering of a split in the Western camp. To achieve the last aim the Soviets attempted to arouse Western distrust of the FRG and to draw the FRG away from the West a la Rapallo.⁵³ Because of Adenauer, this tactic failed. This attempt, however, was reminiscent of many

⁵²Hartmann, Between East and West, pp. 76-77.

⁵³Mansfield, German Unity, pp. 92-93.

Soviet attempts to try to capitalize on what they called the 'internal contradictions of the capitalist world'.

Concurrent with Moscow's establishment of relations with the FRG, was the further upgrading of the Soviet-GDR relationship. The respective diplomatic missions were upgraded to full fledged embassies. The Soviets also announced that the GDR was now totally responsible for all internal activities and that Soviet troops would only remain temporarily.⁵⁴ This upgrading, actual or chimeral, can be seen as another Soviet move to further their minimal objective of consolidating the GDR politically by enhancing the regime's prestige.

The significant divergences that became manifest at the summit were still quite apparent at the foreign minister conference in Geneva during the fall of 1955. Molotov's proposal at the conference was basically a restatement of the Soviet position at the summit. Once again the Soviet position clearly stated that the question of German reunification would have to be preceded by a solution to the question of European security. The Western statesmen Foster Dulles and Harold Macmillan were genuinely surprised that Molotov's

⁵⁴Hartmann, Between East and West, pp. 78-79; and "Treaty on Relations Between the USSR and GDR", New Times No. 39 (Sept. 22, 1953) p. 8-9.

proposal was not connected with the reunification question.⁵⁵ Once the security question had been resolved, the Soviet position implied, it might be possible to effect reunification. Then, however, only through an inter-German rapprochement.

Molotov also emphasized that the Soviets were committed to the East German regime. In the following passage he stated this commitment and the incompatibility of the two Germanies:

When there exists 2 German states with different social systems, the settlement of the German problem cannot be sought to the detriment ... of the social achievements of the workers of the German Democratic Republic, which are of the utmost importance to the German people as a whole. It would be quite unrealistic to try to bring about the unification of Germany through a mechanical merger of its two parts.⁵⁶

At the conference one also saw tactical maneuvering on the part of the Soviets to enhance the international status of the GDR. Molotov strongly suggested that Grotewohl and Adenauer should be present to engineer a rapprochement. The West quickly rejected this maneuver for it would have implied de facto recognition of the GDR.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Sowden, German Question, pp. 176-177.

⁵⁶ Molotov as quoted in Hartmann, Between East and West, p. 80.

⁵⁷ Sowden, German Question, p. 177.

The West's proposal was a modified version of the Eden Plan proposed at Berlin in 1954. The plan as presented by MacMillan called for a reunified Germany free to ally itself with the West. In deference to the Soviets, allied troops would not be stationed in the former Soviet zone.⁵⁸ This proposal highlights one of the constraints that the Soviets had to deal with in formulating a German policy -- either a Western failure to realize that the Soviets would not accept a reunified Germany aligned with NATO or a deliberate strategy to obstruct questionable and risky Soviet proposals in order to complete the integration of the FRG into NATO.

In summary, one sees an increasing rigidity of the Soviet stance after the ratification of the Paris Treaties. Whether or not they were willing to establish a neutral Germany to preclude a Western aligned FRG before ratification is still open to question. One can say with some certainty that after West German integration into NATO, the Soviets were no longer interested in forming a demilitarized neutral Germany. Rather they were now pursuing their minimal and maximal aims which were the consolidation of Sovietized East Germany and the neutralization of the FRG respectively.

Some observers have accounted for the new Soviet

⁵⁸Hartmann, Between East and West, p. 86.

hard line as a response to Western inflexibility. Wolfram Hanrieder gives a more penetrating analysis. He stated that the hardening of the Soviet position was a function of the Soviet's improved military position, Khrushchev's new power base, and the fact that East Germany was less of a political and economic liability.⁵⁹ Khrushchev was basically optimistic about the prospects of Communism, thus he saw no need to jettison a troubled Communist East Germany to preclude West German rearmament.

One should also consider the Soviet mentality to not want to appear weak in the face of an adversary. The Soviets had warned the West on numerous occasions, that ratification of the Paris Accords would prevent reunification. Thus, to have compromised on the German Question after Western ratification of the Paris Accords might have sent a dangerous message to Eastern Europe implying that Soviet actions were not commensurate with their words. To a certain extent, the Soviets were prisoners of their own rhetoric.

D. Austrian State Treaty and the German Question

Another event occurred in 1955 that had implications on the German Question -- the resolution of the Austrian question with the signing of the Austrian

⁵⁹Hanrieder, Foreign Policy, p. 91.

State Treaty in May of 1955. With the signing of the treaty, the Soviets showed a willingness to compromise. Therefore, many people viewed Austrian neutrality as a model for German reunification. This school of thought believed that because the Soviets had willingly withdrawn from their zone in Austria in exchange for neutrality, the Soviets would be willing to allow the reunification of Germany in exchange for neutrality. Is the comparison valid? Did the Soviets actually intend for the Austrian State treaty to serve as a model for German reunification?

In the first place, what did the Soviets give up when they signed the treaty and withdrew their forces? The entire country only had seven million people, while the Soviet zone had a populace between one and two million. Austria, unlike Germany, was not an industrial prize. In fact, the Austrian industries expropriated by the Soviets were losing propositions.⁶⁰

In the strategic sense, the land occupied by the Soviets was not key terrain. The most defensible terrain was either to the east in Hungary or to the west which was occupied by the West.

⁶⁰Robert L. Ferring, "The Austrian State Treaty of 1955 and the Cold War". Western Political Quarterly (Dec., 1968) p. 667.

Perhaps of more importance the Austrian Communists failed miserably. They were defeated at both the ballot box and at the ramparts. On two occasions the Austrian workers prevented attempted coup d'etats by the Austrian Communists.⁶¹

Unlike Germany, Austria did not have two separate governments. The Austrian provisional government, unlike the GDR was not an established Sovietized regime. The venerable Socialist Karl Renner had established a united provisional government that was not a stooge of the Soviets.⁶² Thus, the Soviets were not leaving behind an established Communist regime. The Soviets were not turning their back on a "fraternal socialist" ally. Therefore, there was little loss of prestige when the Soviets withdrew.

One must also ask what benefits would the Soviets accrue from compromising on the Austrian question. Neutral Austria disrupted the NATO lines of communication between Italy and West Germany.⁶³ The

⁶¹Bruno Kreisky, "Austria Draws the Balance" Foreign Affairs Vol. 37-2 (January 1958), p. 271.

⁶²Ferring, "Cold War, p. 655; and Kreisky, "Balance", p. 270.

⁶³Vojtech Mastny, "Kremlin Politics and the Austrian Settlement", Problems of Communism (July-August 1982), p. 47.

Treaty also prevented the expressed Soviet fear of an "Anschluss" with West Germany and the subsequent rearming of western Austria.

There is some evidence that the Soviet elite may have followed a cost benefit analysis similar to this line of reasoning. In a speech before the CPSU Central Committee in July 1955, Khrushchev said the following:

Compromise always meant a loss of something in order to gain something else. In rather unimportant questions the Soviet Union must be prepared for concessions ... Compromise should not be allowed in situations or areas where they would weaken the unity of the Communist countries.⁶⁴

The Soviet press skillfully played on neutralist and nationalist feelings in the FRG with hints that the Austrian settlement could serve as a model for Germany. The following passage from Pravda is an example of this tactic:

The creation of a new stable international position for Austria, real prospects for which are now open to her will signify an important step toward strengthening peace ... This cannot help but be considered by certain other European peoples primarily the German people who are legitimately demanding that the German

⁶⁴Khrushchev as quoted in Allard, Austrian State Treaty, pp. 216-217.

problem be settled.⁶⁵

Many observers discount these Soviet appeals as plays to create dissension and arouse neutralist sentiment in West. Robert Ferring saw the Austria settlement as a model for Third World countries not for Germany. The Soviet willingness to compromise would be an example of how well the Soviets treat neutral countries. Thus, making neutrality appear attractive to countries outside of NATO and keeping these non-committed nations from aligning themselves with the West.⁶⁶ The trips of Khrushchev and Bulganin to India and Egypt during this same period lends credence to this hypothesis.

Soviet actions in Austria probably had little impact in the long run on Third World nations' decisions concerning nonalignment. In the 50's, though, the Soviets may have been looking for ways to draw Third World nations away from such Western defense organizations as Cento and Seato. Thus, the Soviets may have compromised partly to attract Third World nations to nonalignment.

The prominent Austrian Socialist Bruno Kreisky, who played a significant role in the negotiation

⁶⁵"Austria", Pravda (April 16, 1955) in Current Digest of the Soviet Press Vol. VII-15 (May 25, 1955).

⁶⁶Ferring, "Cold War", p. 665.

process, also discounted Austrian neutrality as a model for Germany as he pointed out in the following passage:

The widespread opinion that the Soviets accepted the State treaty because they meant to create a model for the subsequent solution of the German problem is quite erroneous. The difference in the relative importance of the two countries means that the case can never be equated. Rather it seems to me Austria was intended to serve as a model for some of the smaller NATO countries. It was a time when important military installations were to be erected on the territory of some of these countries and the Soviet Union considered them a threat to its security.⁶⁷

There is further evidence to suggest that the Soviets did not consider Austrian neutrality as a model for Germany. When Molotov was asked by Austrian Vice Chancellor Scharf for the West German SPD leader Erich Ollenhauer if the Austrian settlement could apply to Germany, Molotov replied with an adamant NO! Khrushchev told the French statesman Guy Mollet in May 1956, that the neutralization of Germany would not be sufficient compensation for the reunification of Germany. He added that if a neutral Austria was not intended as a model for Germany, it should instead act as a model for divided Germany.⁶⁸

⁶⁷Kreisky, "Balance", p. 277.

⁶⁸Allard, Austrian State Treaty, p. 241.

In short, contrary to many West German enthusiasts, the Austrian State treaty did not signify a Soviet willingness to accept a neutral reunified Germany. The Soviets gave up very little, while they received substantial benefits. The Austrian settlement was not a model for a reunited Germany, but for nonaligned nations, smaller NATO countries and West Germany.

E. Nuclear Weapons, German Reunification and Confederation Proposals

During the years of 1956, 1957 and 1958 one saw a continuation of the Soviet position towards the German Question that had become pronounced after the ratification of the Paris Accords. The Soviet Deutschlandpolitik was designed to achieve the minimal aim of consolidating the Sovietized East German regime and the maximal aim of neutralizing West Germany. To achieve these aims the Soviets and their Eastern allies proposed a series of disengagement plans and German confederation plans. However, in 1956, there was another dimension added to the German Question which undoubtedly influenced Soviet behavior -- the decision to deploy nuclear weapons in the FRG.

According to Adam Ulam the big Soviet fear of the late 1950's was the fear of West Germany having access

to nuclear weapons. Even with Foster Dulles in a key leadership position, the Soviets were not concerned about the Americans. The Germans, however, were a different story. Ulam discussed this factor in the following excerpt:

With even a few nuclear weapons a militarist group in West Germany could blackmail the Soviet satellites or even the USSR itself. The effectiveness of the bomb as a political weapon, the Soviets came to realize very quickly, was not necessarily dependent on the size of the stockpile but on a government's ruthlessness.⁶⁹

Thus, when President Eisenhower offered the FRG tactical nuclear weapons to offset Soviet conventional and tactical nuclear forces in Eastern Europe, the Soviets became quite concerned. In response to this NATO decision, the Soviet bloc proposed the Gromyko Plan of 1956 and the two Rapacki Plans in 1957 and 1958 respectively.⁷⁰

All of these plans would have created a nuclear free zone of Central Europe. In the nuclear free zone,

⁶⁹Adam Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1974), p. 610.

⁷⁰Griffith, Ostpolitik, pp. 79-85, and Catherine McArdle Kelleher, Germany and the Politics of Nuclear Weapons (New York: Columbia U. Press, 1975), pp. 117-118.

which would have included not only the FRG and the GDR, but also Poland and Czechoslovakia, nuclear weapons would have been prevented from being produced, serviced, stockpiled and deployed. The second Rapacki plan also proposed a mutual reduction of conventional forces. If any of the plans had been accepted they would have undercut the American advantage in tactical nuclear weapons without hurting the future emplacement of Soviet strategic missiles.⁷¹

None of these plans addressed German reunification. Rather denuclearization of West Germany was now a necessary precondition for discussion on the German Question. Even then, the German Question would only be a topic of discussion for the two Germanies. Bulganin's note to Eisenhower pointed this out when Bulganin called Four Power discussion on this issue "inadmissible interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states, to which the Soviet Union will never in any case agree."⁷² Thus, one now sees the refusal of the Soviets to even discuss German reunification.

Although the Soviets rejected discussions of the German Question with the Western Powers, they sent a

⁷¹Griffith, Ostpolitik, pp. 80-83, and Ulam, Expansion, p. 610.

⁷²Hartmann, Between East and West, p. 87.

number of conciliatory diplomatic feelers to the West German government tying denuclearization with reunification. One note from Bulganin in 1957 hinted at a Soviet trade of progress on reunification for a West German action rejecting deployment of intermediate range ballistic missiles and nuclear capable weapon systems. While Bulganin told the West that reunification was a matter between the two Germanies, he wrote Adenauer that:

The strengthening of trust and the establishment of friendly cooperation between our countries would also undoubtedly facilitate a solution of the basic national problem of the German people -- the reunification of Germany.⁷³

Along these same lines, the Soviets sent a feeler to Bonn via a Soviet diplomacy journal on April 10, 1957 -- the 35th anniversary of the Rapallo Treaty. The article suggested that the "spirit of Rapallo could be applicable to the "settlement of Soviet-Germany differences."⁷⁴

The Soviet overtures were partially successful for not only the Social Democrats but also such Christian Democrats as Kurt Kiesinger believed that the FRG should

⁷³"Message of N.A. Bulganin to Konrad Adenauer", Izvestia (Feb. 12, 1957) in CDSP Vol. IX-6 (Mar. 20, 1957) pp. 35-36.

⁷⁴Sowden, German Question, p. 184.

refuse to accept the IRBM's. Adenauer himself was wavering. Finally in 1958 the West German ambassador to Moscow, Hans Kroll was prepared to have the FRG permanently remove all nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons in exchange for progress on reunification.⁷⁵ In any event, Adenauer squelched this possible avenue when he replied in a note to the Soviets that any serious negotiations on differences (meaning nuclear weapons) would have to be preceded by free elections.⁷⁶

Did Adenauer miss another golden opportunity when he dismissed the Soviet feelers tying denuclearization and reunification? If the Soviets had been serious about trading denuclearization of West Germany for substantial progress on reunification they would have approached the Western Powers. By only approaching the FRG it appears as if the Soviets were attempting to either draw the Bonn government away from the West or arouse Western mistrust of a possible Rapallo treaty.

As mentioned earlier the Soviets after 1955 were no longer receptive to discussion on German reunification. Consequently all the formal proposals concerning reunification came from the East Germans. The first

⁷⁵Kelleher, Nuclear Weapons, p. 131, p. 339.

⁷⁶Wolfe, Indivisible Germany, p. 82.

East German initiative was Walter Ulbricht's New Year's eve confederation plan on 31 December 1956. According to this plan a confederation would be just one step in a three step process to eventual reunification. The confederation would be preceded by a rapprochement of the two Germanies and followed by "democratic" elections and the formation of a national assembly. On 3 February, 1957 Ulbricht outlined the preconditions to his proposal. These were the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the FRG, a European security pact, and the removal of Adenauer from power. Other preconditions were the annulment of all West German industrial laws, radical agrarian and educational reforms along East German lines, and the expropriation of land owners.⁷⁷

Even Ulbricht must have realized that his preconditions were unacceptable to the West Germans. Thus, this proposal must have simply been a propaganda play.⁷⁸

Several months later, Otto Grotewohl of the GDR unveiled his confederation plan, without Ulbricht's ridiculous preconditions. The first phase would be the formation of an all-German council based on a treaty of

⁷⁷Sowden, German Question, pp. 183-184, and Wolfe, Indivisible, pp. 78-80.

⁷⁸Wolfe, Indivisible, pp. 78-80.

international law. This council would resolve the mutual problems of production and deployment of nuclear weapons in Germany and the withdrawal of both German states from their respective alliances. Once these mutual differences were resolved, the rapprochement could move to economic and cultural areas.⁷⁹

Both of these plans, had they been accepted by the FRG, would have helped the Soviets meet their Deutschlandpolitik objectives. By agreeing to meet with the GDR on an equal basis, the FRG would have granted implicit recognition if not explicit recognition of the GDR. By expelling all NATO troops and renouncing nuclear weapons, the FRG would have been neutralized. At any point after the attainment of these objectives, the East Germans at Moscow's behest could have broken off negotiations. Both plans reinforced the Gromyko and Rapacki plans, in that denuclearization of the FRG was either a precondition or an initial phase of the process.

In summary, one saw a further hardening of the Soviet position on the German Question from 1956 through 1958. Whereas in 1956 reunification was the primary responsibility of the two Germanies, by 1957 it was the exclusive responsibility of the two German states.⁸⁰

⁷⁹Sowden, German Question, pp. 186-187.

⁸⁰Hartmann, Between East and West, p. 91.

The only matter to be discussed among the Four Powers was a European security pact and peace treaty. With the exception of the Bulganin notes, the Soviets did not address the reunification question. Even then it was to the exclusion of the Western powers.

F. The China Factor

Although most Western statesmen did not perceive Red China as a possible card to be played against the Soviet Union, Konrad Adenauer did. Adenauer was an adherent of the school of thought perpetuated by Dr. Wilhelm Starlinger. In his book Hinter Russland China, Dr. Starlinger predicted that the Soviets would be willing to grant concessions to the FRG on reunification because of China. All the West Germans would had to do was wait for the Sino-Soviet split to occur and then the FRG could bargain on favorable terms.⁸¹

In his memoirs, Adenauer wrote about his conversations with Khrushchev discussing Red China. The following is an interpretation of one of those conversations by the late chancellor:

Khrushchev came again to speak about Red China. He described Red China a the great problem 'Imagine Red China already has 600 million people, every year another twelve million. All those people, who live on a handful of rice. What will,' and at that

⁸¹Vali, Quest, pp. 136-138.

point he clasped his hands together, 'what will come of it?' ...

Khrushchev said suddenly, "we can solve this problem. But it is very difficult. Because of that I ask you Help us, Help us to deal with Red China", and after a pause he added, 'and with the Americans'.⁸²

Adenauer was convinced that Khrushchev was offering him a Rapallo like treaty.⁸³ On three occasions, Khrushchev repeated his request for help against the Chinese. Adenauer did not respond, for the chancellor thought he would be committing a breach of faith with his Western allies. Dealing with the Soviets without American backing, Adenauer surmised, would be like putting one's head in the lion's jaw.⁸⁴

Was Khrushchev willing to trade German reunification for neutrality and economic assistance so he could prepare to deal with the Red Chinese? If so, one must wonder why the Soviet leadership verbally berated Adenauer during the rest of his visit at Moscow. To have traded off the GDR, would have meant to incur the verbal wrath of the Red Chinese for selling out a

⁸²Konrad Adenauer, Erinnerungen Vol. II (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verleger-Anstalt, 1966), p. 528.

⁸³Griffith, Ostpolitik, p. 72.

⁸⁴Adenauer, Erinnerungen, p. 528.

"fraternal Socialist state". It might have split the international Communist movement when Khrushchev still thought he could control it. Thus it appears the Soviet leader was just trying to drive a wedge between the Western allies.

Adam Ulam saw the China factor in another light. According to him, Khrushchev needed to secure a victory in Europe before the West would realize that the myth of Communist unity was indeed a myth. With the increased prestige from a victory on the German Question, perhaps Khrushchev hoped he could convince the Chinese to forego nuclear arms.⁸⁵ In the late 1950's when the Sino-Soviet conflict was widening, Khrushchev may have felt that he was running out of time. Instead of making Khrushchev more conciliatory on the German Question, the China factor may have made the Soviet leader more confrontational.

G. Tactics of Confrontation

The Soviets initiated the second Berlin Crisis with their note of 27 November, 1958. In the note they demanded that the West Berlin "occupation regime" be

⁸⁵Ulam, Expansion, p. 622.

disbanded and a free city in West Berlin be established. The Four Power status of Berlin, the Soviets claimed, was no longer valid thus a peace treaty should be signed to end such an occupation. If no agreement was reached on the status of Berlin, the Soviets would transfer their Berlin responsibilities to the GDR. Therefore, the GDR would have control of traffic in and out of the city. The Soviets also noted, that the West would now have to deal with the GDR. In short the Soviets were implying to the West to get out of Berlin in six months or face another blockade.⁸⁶

On January 10, 1959, the Soviets sent a note to the West calling for a Conference to produce a peace treaty. Both German states should also attend and sign the final treaty. Afterwards, reunification might still be possible sometime in the future as a result of a rapprochement between the two German states. This note was immediately rejected by the FRG, but the Four Powers did convene a foreign minister conference in Geneva in May.⁸⁷

⁸⁶"Sov. Notes to the Governments of the U.S.A., Great Britain and France", New Times No. 49 (Dec. 1958) pp. 35-47; and Ulam, Expansion, pp. 619-620.

⁸⁷Sowden, German Question, pp. 190-191; and Wolfe, Indivisible, p. 89; and "U.S.S.R. Govt. Note to U.S. Govt." Izvestia (Jan. 11, 1959) in CDSP Vol. XI-2 (Feb. 11, 1959) pp. 36-37.

At the conference the new American Secretary of State Christian Herter presented his peace plan. One now saw the West becoming more flexible and moving toward the former Soviet position of 1955. Under the Herter Plan, the West finally agreed to an all-German Council, albeit one with a preponderance of representatives from the FRG. This consultative body would establish all German elections and negotiate a peace treaty. Herter also offered a parallel security plan in which the West would guarantee that the Eastern Zone would not be occupied by Western troops and the garrison of Berlin be reduced and prevented from engaging in "unfriendly activities". As one observer stated, these were the "most far reaching Western concessions to date". Not only was Adenauer opposed to the Herter plan, but so was the Social Democrat Willy Brandt, who was quite alarmed.⁸⁸

In any event, the Soviets rejected the proposal citing their standard argument that unification could only be the result of an agreement between the two German states. Gromyko pointed out that talking about reunification was a waste of time that should be spent

⁸⁸Hartmann, Between East and West, pp. 105-106; and Wolfe, Indivisible, p. 91.

on the peace treaty. He also cited that Herter's plan would "maintain the occupation regime and extend to the rest of the city".⁸⁹

By rejecting the Herter Plan outright, the Soviets demonstrated once again that they were not interested in reunification. Rather they only wanted to solidify the division by making it more explicit with Western disengagement from Berlin and to prevent the West Germans from having nuclear weapons.⁹⁰

Shortly thereafter, Gromyko upped the ante again with his so called "Diktat". The specifics of the Diktat were the following: An all German committee would prepare for a peace treaty with the Four Powers. In the meantime the powers should continue occupation for one additional year but with a limited number of troops, and with the cessation of all anti-Communist propaganda and subversive activities from West Berlin. Gromyko later extended the time period to 18 months. While the Soviets hoped their ultimatums would divide the West it only served to unite them.⁹¹

Khrushchev further inflamed the situation with the

⁸⁹Hartmann, Between East and West, p. 107; K. Hofman, "Around the Berlin Issue", New Times No. 22 (May 1959), p. 6.

⁹⁰Hanrieder, Foreign Policy, p. 176.

⁹¹Hartmann, Between East and West, p. 109; "Ossified Diplomacy", New Times No. 25 (June, 1959), p. 2.

following remarks:

We intend to conclude the German peace treaty. ... This would mean the end of all the remains of occupation. If any other states undertake any effort to restore the occupation regime by force the Soviet Union will support the German Democratic Republic with every means at its disposal, and as a faithful ally according to the Warsaw Treaty it will defend the territorial integrity of the German Democratic Republic.⁹²

During the summit at Camp David, Khrushchev defused the situation by removing the 18 month time limit. He agreed with Eisenhower to resolve the German Question as soon as possible and invited Eisenhower to the Soviet Union. However, shortly after the summit in the United States, Khrushchev issued another ultimatum in April of 1960:

If the Soviets signed a separate peace, and the West refused, they will not retain the right They naturally will forfeit the right of access to West Berlin by land and water and air.⁹³

Fortunately for Khrushchev the U-2 incident gave him a pretext to cancel the summit. During the 1960 American presidential election campaign, the Soviets defused the crisis again. However, once Khrushchev had sized up Kennedy at the Vienna summit he inflamed the

⁹²Khrushchev as quoted in Hartmann, Between East and West, p. 112.

⁹³Khrushchev as quoted in Hartmann, Between East and West, p. 117.

crisis again.⁹⁴

Wolfram Hanrieder saw the Soviet confrontational tactics as a logical culmination of the German policy they had conducted since 1955.⁹⁵ After three years of failing to reach their objective through non-confrontational diplomacy and projecting the image of a peace-loving nation, the Soviets resorted to the familiar tactic of probing an apparent weakness. In this case the West's Achilles heel was Berlin.

Other observers believed Khrushchev was trying to take advantage of what he saw as the disarray of the Western camp.⁹⁶

Ulam saw Khrushchev's see saw brinkmanship as the result of the Soviet leader's internal political problems and the China factor. Even after Khrushchev had successfully removed Malenkov and Molotov as obstacles to his rule and assumed Chairmanship of the Council of Ministers, his hold on power was still precarious. Thus, according to Ulam, Khrushchev's foreign policy had to be made at the spur of the moment to keep one step ahead of both his internal and Chinese critics. Thus one objective of the confrontational

⁹⁴Wolfe, Indivisible, p. 92.

⁹⁵Hanrieder, Foreign Policy, p. 175.

⁹⁶Hartmann, Between East and West, p. 103.

tactics was to secure a dramatic victory to enhance Khrushchev's eroding prestige.⁹⁷

Other objectives of the Soviet tactics were the familiar ones. Unless the Soviets could solve the Berlin problem to their advantage, the achievement of their minimal aim of consolidating the political hold of the SED in East Germany was doomed. Berlin was the sieve in which the GDR was losing 230,000 people annually. The majority of these refugees were professionals, skilled workers and the young. Fifty percent of the refugees were under 25 while 74 percent were under 45. The GDR had numerous economic problems, and the flow of skilled workers to the West was only exacerbating the situation.⁹⁸ The Soviets were also hoping to force the FRG to partake in negotiations with the GDR on a Peace Treaty. By doing so the FRG and the West would implicitly recognize the East German regime.⁹⁹

Another objective was the fulfillment of the maximum goal -- neutralization of West Germany. Perhaps Khrushchev was hoping to induce the West to

⁹⁷Ulam, Expansion, p. 605, p. 622.

⁹⁸Hartmann, Between East and West, p. 104.

⁹⁹Griffith, Ostpolitik, p. 92.

trade a West German renunciation of nuclear weapons for continued Western access and presence in West Berlin.

Ulam discussed this factor in the following passage:

To us now, it is clear that the main Soviet objective was to secure an agreement that would make it impossible for West Germany to obtain nuclear weapons. This was indicated in the Soviet note which said the 'best way to solve the Berlin question ... would mean the withdrawal of the FRG from NATO, with the simultaneous withdrawal of the GDR from the Warsaw Treaty Organization.' ... The Soviets thought that pressure on Berlin was the most efficacious way of obtaining what they really wanted, the neutralization of Germany and one suspects that for the moment they would have settled for a firm pledge that West Germany would be banned from having a nuclear force.¹⁰⁰

In their efforts to divide and conquer the West, the Soviets attempted to negotiate with the FRG while simultaneously dealing with the three powers. Although he initially wavered, Adenauer broke off these exploratory talks. Thus despite the efforts of the Soviets to play on the fissiparous tendencies of the alliance, the West held together. President Kennedy called up military reserves and placed American forces on alert. He also expressed a willingness to use nuclear weapons to preserve the present status of West

¹⁰⁰Ulam, Expansion, p. 620.

Berlin and the Western ties to the city.¹⁰¹

Khrushchev did not succeed in facing down the West in Berlin, but his brinkmanship did lead to a dramatic increase in the number of East Germans fleeing the GDR. Twenty-Two Thousand East Germans fled the East during the first twelve days of August. Ulbricht's forced collectivization was driving peasants to the West, while prospects of war further fanned the exodus. Khrushchev's tactics and rhetoric had placed himself between a rock and a hard place. If he had carried out his assorted threats, it would have meant war. If he had done nothing, it would have meant the possible collapse of the GDR and the certain loss of prestige for the Soviet leader.¹⁰² Thus the Berlin Wall was built in August of 1961.

The construction of the Berlin Wall was the turning point of the Soviet German policy. Until the Wall was constructed the East German people, unlike other Communist populations in Eastern Europe, had a choice. They could stay in the GDR or leave through Berlin. After the construction of the Wall the East German people not only lost this choice but also realized that

¹⁰¹Griffith, Ostpolitik, pp. 90-92.

¹⁰²Hartmann, Between East and West, pp. 121-125.

Western policy was powerless to change the status quo in the East. Therefore, they resigned themselves to staying in the East and making the best of a bad situation.¹⁰³ Looking back twenty years later, one can say that the building of the Berlin Wall helped the Soviets fulfill the minimal goal of their German Policy -- the consolidation of the GDR, more than any other act or event. Although eventual Western recognition of the GDR also helped consolidate the regime.

Willy Brandt discussed the implications of the Wall in the following passage:

This achieved a substantial measure of what Khrushchev's ultimatum had been designed to effect at the end of 1958. Confusion on the West German side and a certain loss of faith in the allies were from the Soviet angle a welcome bonus.¹⁰⁴

After the Wall, the reunification of Germany was no longer a topic of discussion between the Four Powers. Thus, the Soviets had finally removed the topic from the international agenda and thereby led to the implicit recognition of the status quo. After the Wall, the Soviets refrained from using the lure of German reunification to the FRG to secure their maximum

¹⁰³Griffith, Ostpolitik, 101, and Martin McCauley, The German Democratic Republic Since 1945, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), p. 103.

¹⁰⁴Brandt, People and Politics, p. 29.

objective -- the neutralization of West Germany. As far as the Soviets were concerned, the question of German reunification, if it hadn't been earlier appeared to be closed.

CHAPTER IV

FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR GERMAN REUNIFICATION

As far as the Soviets and the East German elite are concerned, the question of German reunification is for the present closed. They maintain that the irreconcilable differences in the two social systems preclude German reunification.¹ Accordingly any talk by West German circles concerning the possibility of German reunification is immediately denounced as "revanchism". Shortly after SED leader Erich Honecker postponed his visit to the FRG, the Soviet journal New Times published an article attacking Helmut Kohl's "subversive" policy towards the GDR. The article also reconfirmed the inviolability of the German Socialist Nation:

Official Bonn continues to insist that the 'German Question' is still open and tries even more persistently to interfere in the internal affairs of the GDR ... Thus the revanchist forces in West Germany seeking to capitalize on nationalism are hoping to be able to make the German Democratic Republic a 'weak link' in the Socialist community, to undermine socialism in the German worker-peasant state,

¹ Andrei Gromyko and B.N. Ponomarev, eds. Soviet Foreign Policy Vol. II 1945-1980 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1981), p. 324 and from an interview the author conducted with Mr. Bauer, a political officer at the GDR Embassy, 3 July 1985.

and to prepare the ground for the swallowing-up of the German Democratic Republic. But these are futile hopes. 'Socialism in the German Democratic Republic cannot be shaken', Erich Honecker stressed recently.²

Thus, one can say for the foreseeable future German reunification is out of the question. However, the reawakening of German interest in reunification, partially sparked by the recent inter-German rapprochement, demonstrates that the German Question is not closed.

The popular response to Chancellor Kohl's enthusiastic remarks on reunification shows that the West German public is still deeply interested in reunification.³ While the West German consensus on national security and defense is unraveling, the entire West German political spectrum agrees that German reunification is desirable.⁴ One observer discussed this resilient German nationalism:

The expectation that the desire of reunification would gradually fade into

²A Tolpegin, "Revanchism", New Times No. 40 (October 1984), p. 11.

³Helena Page, "Reunification and the Successor Generation in Germany". The Washington Quarterly (Winter 1984), p. 60.

⁴John McLaughlin, "Germany Reunified", National Review (August 19, 1983), p. 988.

oblivion as the successor generation gains prominence has not been bourne out. Rather the longing for German reunification shows signs of having the same emotional durability that the longing for Polish independence had.⁵

If anything the younger generation is much more enthusiastic than the older generation. Helmut Kohl, a young boy during the war, has been the most outspoken chancellor in support of reunification as his visit to Moscow in 1983 showed, when he told Yuri Andropov of his resolve to bring about peaceful reunification. Historian Peter Brandt is much more adamant about reunification than his famous father Willy ever was.⁶

What then are the possibilities for German reunification in the future? Disregarding Soviet rhetoric, are the West Germans simply dreaming? In the attempt to answer these questions, this chapter will discuss the future prospects of German reunification vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. This discussion will deal with the following issues: (1) the importance of the GDR to the Soviet Union, (2) the Soviet attitude toward the recent inter-German rapprochement, and (3) various German neutralist schemes vis-a-vis the Soviets.

⁵Page, "Generation", p. 66.

⁶McLaughlin, "Reunified", p. 988; and Page, "Generation", p. 60.

Finally this writer will attempt to construct a possible model of German reunification the Soviets might consider and the possible circumstances and conditions that might induce the Soviets to consider the German Question.

A. The GDR: An Integral Part of the Soviet Empire

Some observers discount the significance of the GDR as a military glacis or staging area for a Soviet attack on the West during this thermonuclear age. Rather they see the Soviet forces in the GDR primarily as a police keeping force for the SED regime. The fact that the Soviet military commander has special powers concerning intervention in the GDR lends credence to this view. According to the troop stationing treaty of 12 March 1957 the Soviet commander can take "appropriate" measures if he feels the interests of the Soviet troops in the GDR are threatened. This treaty which is unique among the Warsaw Pact nations has yet to be revised.⁷

The Soviet troops do play a policing role in East Germany, one, however, should not discount the conventional military role of the Soviet forces in East Germany.

⁷Boris Meissner, "Die DDR in Sowjetischen Bundissystem". Aussenpolitik (4 Quartal, 1984), p. 381.

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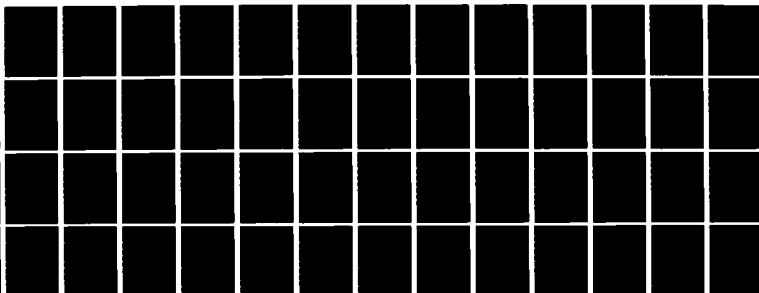
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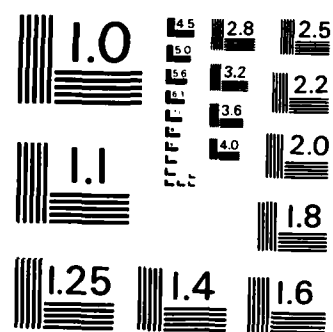
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With its 20 combat divisions and Air Army the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany (GSFG) is the largest and best equipped Soviet military force outside of the Soviet Union. Although the nuclear balance of terror greatly diminishes the chance of a Soviet conventional attack, the preponderance of armored and motorized units in the GSFG demonstrates that the Soviets consider a conventional attack from East Germany as a viable option if necessary. The fact that GSFG with 425,000 personnel is almost three times the size of the East German National Volks Armee (NVA) also demonstrates that the Soviet force is more than just a police keeping force.⁸

The enormity itself of the Soviet forces in East Germany also shows how important the GDR is to the Soviets in terms of military strategic significance. In contrast to the 20 Soviet combat divisions in the GDR there are only six Soviet divisions in Czechoslovakia and four in Hungary.⁹

Although the East German NVA is relatively small, it is considered the most competent and reliable of the

⁸Melvin Croan, East Germany-The Soviet Connection (London: Sage, 1978) p. 47; and Eugene K. Keefe ed. East Germany: A Country Study (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt., 1982), p. 232.

⁹Keefe, East Germany, p. 232.

Warsaw Pact Forces in the eyes of the Soviets.¹⁰ The NVA is also unique in that it may be the only army in the world that is constitutionally bound to the force of another nation for the military oath of the East German Armed Forces is:

I swear: to be always ready, side by side with the Soviet Army and the armies of our socialists allies.¹¹

Thus, the Soviet elite and military would be disinclined to lightly disavow the NVA as an ally.

Although Westerners may discount East Germany as a staging area for an attack on the West, East Europeans are very cognizant of the Soviet military presence in the GDR. Twice the GDR has served as a staging ground for Soviet interventions in Eastern Europe.¹² The GSFG also staged maneuvers in the GDR at the height of Solidarity crisis in Poland, not coincidentally.

¹⁰Thomas W. Wolfe, "The Soviet Union's Strategic Stake in the GDR", World Today (December 1971), p. 347.

¹¹Keefe, East Germany, p. 218.

¹²Wolfe, "Strategic", p. 340.

From his study of Soviet military literature, Thomas Wolfe concluded that the Soviet military has not downgraded the strategic importance of the GDR. Furthermore, he sees little chance for a change in Soviet military thinking because of the historical experience of the Soviet military elite.¹³

While the East German regime may have been a drain on Soviet resources in the 1950's causing some Soviet elites to want to jettison the regime, the GDR is a far cry from that today. Today the GDR is increasingly looked upon as a junior partner of the Soviet Union, both in Eastern Europe and the Third World.

Perhaps in the attempt to prevent a possible Soviet desertion of the GDR, the SED elite has been the most loyal Soviet ally in Eastern Europe:

East Germany's Socialist Unity Party is second to none in asserting its allegiance to Soviet centered 'Socialist internationalism'. Accordingly it is also among the most zealous in guarding against untoward revelations of disalignment from Soviet positions.¹⁴

¹³Ibid, p. 343, 349.

¹⁴Croan, Soviet Connection, p. 17.

Since Erich Honecker's succession to the leadership in 1971 the SED regime has further tightened East German relations with the Comecon and further integrated the GDR into the Warsaw Pact. Although this trend was a Soviet directed one, the GDR leadership, unlike other East Europeans, was quite enthusiastic about it.¹⁵

Honecker further ingratiated the regime to the Soviets when he revised the East German constitution in 1974. The new revision not only neglected to mention reunification for the first time but it also said the following:

The German Democratic Republic is irrevocably and forever allied with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The close and fraternal alliance with it is a guarantee to the people of the GDR and of its further advance on the road to socialism and peace.¹⁶

In addition the SED has been in complete ideological harmony with the Soviets. At all ideological meetings of the East European parties, the SED has championed the position of the CPSU. At the all-European Congress of Communist Parties hosted in East Berlin in 1976, the SED denounced the Eurocommunists and defended the "validity of the

¹⁵Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁶Gunter Minnerup, "East Germany's Frozen Revolution", New Left Review (March-April 1982), p. 29.

dictatorship of the proletariat".¹⁷

It appears as if the GDR is the point man for the Soviets in political and ideological matters concerning the East bloc nations. Perhaps in return for loyal services rendered, Honecker was given the honor of the first ally to speak at the CPSU congress in 1981. Instead of Poland, the GDR now launches trial balloons. Honecker's recent call for a nuclear and chemical free zone is an example of this.¹⁸

The GDR economy is also more closely integrated with the Soviet Union than any other East European nation. In addition to the long term planning that is conducted jointly and reciprocal investment projects, ~~eighty~~ percent of all East German research and development is conducted with the Soviets.¹⁹

Compared to the other East bloc countries, the GDR is an economic bulwark. It is the second largest economic power in CMEA with a per capita GNP greater than Italy and Great Britian.²⁰ As long as the GDR

¹⁷Croan, Soviet Connection, pp. 45-46.

¹⁸Ronald D. Asmus. "The Moscow-East Berlin-Bonn Triangle", Orbis (Winter 1985), pp. 767-768.

¹⁹Croan, Soviet Connection, p. 51.

²⁰Minnerup, "Frozen", p. 5.

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continues its special relationship with the FRG, in which the FRG subsidizes the GDR with one billion DM (Deutsche Marks) annually,²¹ the Soviets should not have to be concerned with propping up the East German regime.

In addition to the GDR's political and economic role in Eastern Europe, the GDR has become a valuable asset in the Third World. The 1970's saw a growing collaboration between the Soviets, East Germans and the Cubans in the Third World. While the Soviets provide the material, the Cubans provide the troops, the East Germans provide the administrative and technical expertise.²²

The East German presence in 22 African and Middle Eastern nations became known in Western circles as the "new German Africa Corps". While Der Spiegel claimed there were 2770 East Germans in Africa in 1981, another observer claimed there were 3000 East Germans in Mozambique alone. In addition, he maintained there were five brigades of "Free German Youth" in Angola and 150 military instructors in Zambia.²³

²¹Ronald D. Asmus, "East and West Germany: Continuity and Change," The World Today (April, 1984), pp. 142-152.

²²Keefe, East Germany, p. 194.

²³Martin McCauley. The German Democratic Republic Since 1945 (New York: St. Martins Press, 1983); and Minnerup, "Frozen", p. 28; and Keefe, East Germany, p. 217.

Among other places, the East German military demonstrated its value during the Ethiopian civil war. The Marxist-Leninist leader Mengistu Haile Mariam praised the East German advisors and promised they would have a "permanent place in the history of the Ethiopian revolution".²⁴

The GDR has also demonstrated its "anti imperialist credentials" in Afghanistan, where East Germans have established field hospitals, trained Afghan security forces and established information services.²⁵

The GDR has numerous pacts with Third World countries to protect "Socialist" or "revolutionary achievements" along with the principle of "proletarian internationalism".²⁶

Thus, if the Soviets were to turn their backs on the Communist regime in East Germany for the exit of the FRG from NATO, they would send a dangerous signal not only to Eastern Europe, but also to the Third World. Third World leftists might reason if the Soviets were to desert an ally like the GDR which has demonstrated its

²⁴Keefe, East Germany, p. 195.

²⁵McCauley, German Democratic Republic, pp. 192-193.

²⁶Meissner, "DDR", pp. 386-387.

"anti-imperialist" credentials on numerous occasions, the Soviets are not to be trusted.

According to several scholars, because of the Soviet Union's continuing economic and agricultural problems, Soviet foreign policy successes are needed to help maintain the regime's legitimacy. Adam Ulam discussed this factor:

If some meaning is to be attached to the ideology, if it is not to fade completely in the minds of the Soviet people, then it must show its effectiveness in propelling Soviet society into economic and scientific development at a faster pace than that achieved by societies inspired by the rival creed. And most important of all the Soviet brand of Marxism must be shown to be advancing in the world at large, proving alluring to societies emerging from backwardness and colonial rule. The battle to preserve Soviet ideology in the USSR, and with it the rationale of the totalitarian system is thus being fought in a world context: and the spread of Soviet ideology, influence and prestige throughout the world becomes increasingly crucial to the preservation of the Soviet system as we know it.²⁷

²⁷Adam Ulam, "Soviet Ideology and Soviet Foreign Policy" in The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy, eds. Erik P. Hoffman and Frederick Fleron, Jr. (New York: Aldine Publishing Co., 1980), p. 142.

If the Soviet elite derives internal legitimacy from foreign policy victories -- perhaps one could say they would lose some legitimacy through foreign policy defeats or failures to protect 'socialist' achievements. Therefore, to let a fraternal socialist republic like the GDR unite with the capitalist FRG would be a bitter blow to the internal prestige of the Soviet regime.

East Germany as part of Eastern Europe serves not only as a military glacis but perhaps of more importance as an ideological buffer zone separating the Soviet Union from the Western democracies. Jiri Valenta discussed this factor in the following passage:

The Soviets foremost preoccupation is ideological deviation and its possible spillover from neighboring countries into the Soviet Union. Above all the Soviets are concerned that a more humanitarian form of government may 'infect' the Soviet people and weaken the regime from the inside.²⁸

While the authoritarian Soviet regime may reflect the political culture of the Russian people, it does not

²⁸Jiri Valenta, "Revolutionary Change, Soviet Intervention, and Normalization in East Central Europe" Comparative Politics (January 1984), p. 147.

necessarily reflect the political culture of the many other nationalities in the Soviet Union.²⁹ Thus the Soviets intervened in Czechoslovakia in 1968 to strangle the Prague experiment not because they were afraid of the Czechs leaving the Warsaw Pact, but because they were concerned about the spillover both in Eastern Europe and in the Western republics of the Soviet Union. It is no coincidence that P.E. Shelest, the former secretary of the Ukrainian central committee was one of the most ardent supporters of the invasion of Czechoslovakia.³⁰

The GDR has been dubbed the "linchpin of the Soviet hegemonial system in East Central Europe."³¹ This looms even larger when one considers the unstable situation in Poland. One can only imagine what effect a totally demilitarized, neutralized and even Finlandized reunified Germany would have on Poland. Severe political unrest could possibly spillover into the Baltic republics, the Ukraine and Byelorussia.

²⁹John Joyce, "The Old Russian Legacy", Foreign Policy (Summer 1984), pp. 150-151.

³⁰Valenta, "Normalization", p. 132.

³¹Ferenc Vali. The Quest For A United Germany (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), p. 280.

Whereas the Soviets were once an ideological threat to the West, the Soviets now perceive the West as an ideological threat to the Soviet Union.³² If East Germany is perceived by the Soviet elite as necessary to preserving the ideological buffer of Eastern Europe, one doubts if the Soviets would ever allow reunification.

Jonathan Dean considered the linchpin factor in the following excerpt:

Moscow cannot genuinely loosen its hold over East Germany without facing the loss of its influence in all of Eastern Europe. In addition the demise of communist systems in Eastern Europe would undermine the legitimacy of Soviet political values and of the Soviet system itself.³³

In the last chapter I discounted the Austrian State Treaty as an appropriate model for German reunification vis-a-vis the Soviets in the 1950's. There are, however, some appropriate comparisons. The Hungarian political upheaval in 1956 occurred shortly after the Soviet withdrawal from Austria. The Hungarians may have surmised that if the Soviets were willing to allow Austrian neutrality, the Soviets could do the same for Hungary. If so, they were sadly mistaken. One, though,

³²Dimitri K. Simes, "The Soviet Challenge", Foreign Policy (Summer 1984), p. 113.

³³Jonathan Dean, "How to Lose West Germany", Foreign Policy (Summer 198), p. 60.

can be sure that the Soviet leadership is aware of the time proximity of the Austrian compromise and the Hungarian debacle. The Soviets may surmise that if the release of a non-Socialist state had those consequences, it would be foolhardy to let the GDR go.

In short, one can say that the GDR is an essential and integral element of the Soviet empire. The GDR still retains its military strategic importance as a defensive glacis and a possible offensive staging area. More importantly the GDR is a loyal ideological, political and economic ally both in Eastern Europe and the Third World. To let East Germany reunite with a non Socialist entity might hurt the internal legitimacy of the Soviet regime. Finally the GDR's most important function is that it is the linchpin of the Soviet hegemonial position in Eastern Europe. This is a position which insures that Eastern Europe remains an ideological, social and military buffer between Western pluralism and the Soviet Union.

B. The Soviets and Inter-German Rapprochement

Since Helmut Kohl has become Chancellor of the FRG, there has been a flurry of activity between the two Germanies. At Andropov's funeral in February 1984, Kohl

renewed the invitation to Erich Honecker to visit the FRG. During the past two years the GDR has received two multimillion dollar credit loans from private banks in West Germany. Franz Joseph Strauss, the conservative leader of Bavaria known for his strident criticism of the GDR, consulted with Honecker at Honecker's request during Strauss' visit to the GDR during the summer of 1983.³⁴ As of August 1984, more than 33,000 East Germans had legally migrated to the FRG as opposed to only 7,700 in 1983.³⁵ The pace of inter German relations became even more amazing when one considers that it occurred against the backdrop of bitter Soviet-American relations.

As interest picked up concerning Honecker's impending visit to the FRG, the Soviets launched that familiar tool of bloc unity -- a campaign against alleged West German "revanchism". Typical of the Soviet press attack is the following passage from an editorial shortly before Honecker's scheduled visit:

³⁴Wolf J. Bell, "Strauss-Honecker Meeting Raises Hopes of an East-West Thaw", The German Tribune (August 7, 1983), p. 1.

³⁵"E. Germany Lets 33,000 Migrate, Kohl Announces", The Washington Post (18 August, 1984) sec. A-p. 46.

In Bonn there is open talk about the 'restoration of Germany within the 1937 frontier of the Reich'. Indicative too was the international rally of neo Fascists held the other day in Bavaria which brought together hard core Hitlerite survivors and neo nazi scum from West Germany, Austria, Italy and France under the slogan of revival of the 'German Reich' to call for revision of the outcome of World War II. More, the Bonn government itself is feeding the nationalists' euphoria. The U.S. Pershings have clearly added to the brazenness of West German revenge seekers.³⁶

Interestingly though, the Soviet commentator neglected to mention Honecker's scheduled visit to the 'revanchist' state.

The GDR's relationship with the FRG is quite lucrative for the GDR received the following economic benefits from pursuing detente with the FRG: (1) Tariff free access to the Common Market (2) Over one billion DM annually from the West German budget for various services (3) Roughly 200 million marks per year in hard currency as part of minimum exchange requirements for personal entry into the GDR. (4) 700 million DM annually through special hard currency Intershops (5) Profits from various inter German projects such as the construction of the Hamburg-Berlin autobahn, where the

³⁶Mikhail Fyodoro, "Witches Sabbath of Revanchism" New Times (August 1984-34), p. 28.

GDR was to receive 1.2 Billion Marks.³⁷

Thus it is no surprise that the SED began to value the inter German relationship. Consequently, the German daily Neues Deutschland published articles by politburo member Herbert Haerber defending the inter-German detente.³⁸

The Soviets were becoming increasingly worried about inter-German economic relations and their possible detrimental linkage with Soviet bloc cohesion. Thus, the Soviet press attacked the "FRG's alleged attempts to influence the East European states including the GDR by economic ties".³⁹ After the second West German loan deal, Pravda accused the FRG of "undermining the socialist system in the GDR" and of attempting to "affect the GDR's sovereignty" with economic levers.⁴⁰

³⁷Asmus, "East and West Germany", pp. 142-152. and A. James McAdams, "Surviving the Missile," Orbis (Summer 1983), p. 347.

³⁸William Drozdiak, "East Germans Renew Call For Detente", The Washington Post (11 August, 1984) section A-1.

³⁹Richard Lowenthal, "German Question Transformed," Foreign Affairs (Winter 1984-1985), p. 313.

⁴⁰Walter I. Kiep, "The New Deutschlandpolitik", Foreign Affairs (Winter 1984, 1985), p. 324.

The GDR continued to defend its policy in journals while the Soviets continued their revanchist attacks. Thus, the most serious strain in GDR-Soviet relations had occurred with a new twist. For while the GDR under Ulbricht had been the obstructionist trying to sabotage the Soviet Deutschland politik, the GDR under Honecker was now attempting to limit Soviet efforts to sabotage the new spirit of inter-German cooperation.⁴¹

In any event, Honecker indefinitely postponed his visit to the FRG in September 1984. Observers throughout Western Europe cited Soviet pressure as the reason for Honecker's decision.⁴²

This was the second time in two years that the Soviets had aborted Honecker's plans to visit the FRG. Western commentators cited the obvious need for the Soviets to maintain bloc unity in the context of bitter U.S.-Soviet relations. The Soviets, however, were also sending a signal to both East Berlin and Bonn, that it is the Soviets who control the tempo of inter-German relations, not the Germans. Reunification if it is to occur will not be on West German or even SED terms, but

⁴¹Asmus, "Triangle", p. 743, p. 758.

⁴²William Drozdiak, "Honecker Postpones Bonn Visit", The Washington Post (Sept. 5, 1984) section A-1.

on Soviet terms.

The Soviets realize how important the inter-German relationship is, both as a lever to be used against the FRG and as an economic stabilizer for the GDR. However, the cancellation of the Honecker visit demonstrated that the Soviets did not like where that special German relationship may have been headed. Obviously one can also deduce that if the Soviets are not willing to let the leader of their staunch ally visit his childhood home, they are not about to accept the risks of German reunification.

C. German Neutralist Models vis-a-vis the Soviets

The recent renaissance of the German Question in West Germany had led to the emergence of numerous models for reunification. I will briefly consider the following models advocated by the (1) the Greens, (2) Peter Brandt and (3) Helmut Diwald.

The Greens generally view the Western and Eastern blocs on equal terms. They see the United States as exploiting the FRG and denying the sovereignty of the Federal Republic. According to Green leader Petra Kelly, there is little difference between the FRG and the GDR. Both Germanies are puppets of their respective

superpowers and both are repressive regimes. Kelly further maintains that repression is only more visible in the GDR and that the Greens are the Western equivalent of Poland's Solidarity.⁴³

Most Greens see little difference between Soviet foreign policy and American foreign policy. Thus they tend to equate the U.S. presence in El Salvador with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.⁴⁴

Gerd Bastian, a former Bundeswehr general who is now a Green member of the Bundestag, goes even further. To him, the Western alliance is vastly superior and unnecessarily threatens "an essentially weak and exclusively defensive Soviet Bloc". Bastian claims that the idea that the USSR is an expansionist and overtly aggressive power is a fabrication of NATO and a "fairy tale". Rather the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the repressive nature of both the Soviet Union and the GDR is caused by pressure from the West.⁴⁵

⁴³Robert Pfaltzgraff, Kim Holmes, Clay Clemens, and Werner Kaltefleiter, The Greens of West Germany: Origins, Strategies and Transatlantic Implications. (Cambridge, Mass: Institute for Foreign Policy, 1983), p. 75, 80.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 73.

⁴⁵Horst Mewes, "The West German Green Party", New German Critique (Winter 1983), p. 73.

The Greens claim the United States and the Christian Democrats have fabricated negative images (Feindbilder) of the Soviets and the GDR to prohibit political and social change in the FRG. These negative images have alarmed the Soviets and accordingly led to Soviet fabricated negative images of the West and the perpetuation of Germany's partition.⁴⁶ Former GDR dissident Rudolf Bahro discussed this phenomenon:

The 2 German states are defined in relation to each other. The CDU needs the SED and the SED needs the CDU. Conditions in the GDR are the propaganda kit of the USA and vice versa.⁴⁷

Thus, the first step toward reunification and true peace, the Greens claim, would be for the FRG to unilaterally disarm, leave NATO and become a non-aligned nation. The next step would be to propose a similar bloc free status for the GDR. The FRG's unilateral disarmament and exit from NATO would destroy the GDR's Feinbild of a revanchist West Germany. Accordingly, as the Green scenario continues, the East German people would force their regime to disarm and leave the Warsaw Pact.⁴⁸ Bahro, now a Green activist, believes this

⁴⁶Pfaltzgraf, Greens, p. 72.

⁴⁷Rudolf Bahro, From Red to Green, trans. Gus Fagen and Richard Hunt (London: Verso, 1984), p. 21.

⁴⁸Pfaltzgraff, Greens, pp. 77-79.

approach could not only apply to the two Germanies but also to their respective blocs:

We must therefore advocate an escalation of the process of disarmament by means of major unilateral arms reductions which would force the opposing bloc to follow suit to placate its own public opinion.⁴⁹

Additionally, the Greens believe that public opinion can alter the foreign policy of the Warsaw Pact nations as Bahro continued:

The whole of Europe with our country in the lead must cease to be one of bases from which the Americans enact their global trial of strength with the Soviet Union. Once that is achieved, including the withdrawal of American troops we shall find that, after a certain interval, the nations of Eastern Europe will liberate themselves from the Soviet embrace.⁵⁰

Once both German states were totally demilitarized, a process which would include the abolition of armament industries, the armed forces, and children war games and toys, the two Germanies would form a confederation. This demilitarized confederation would induce the Soviets to loosen their hold on Eastern Europe for the "threat" from Germany and NATO would be greatly reduced. Eventually this confederation would become a reunified

⁴⁹Rudolf Bahro. "The SPD and the Peace Movement," New Left Review (January-February 1982), p. 21.

⁵⁰Ibid.

state which would be, in the words of Bahro, "a cultural, economic, and humane entity threatening no one."⁵¹

Thus, the enactment of the Green model would effect the realization of the maximal aim of the Soviets Deutschlandpolitik -- the detachment of the FRG from the United States and the Western Alliance. This "Finlandinization" of West Germany would be accomplished without the loss of an integral part of the Soviet position in Eastern Europe -- the GDR. The Greens make a fatal error when they fail to realize that the Warsaw Pact is not only a military buffer for the Soviets, but also an ideological glacis.

Given the Soviets aversion to risk, however, and their preference for the European status quo, the Soviets may have mixed feelings about the Greens. The Soviets may feel that the Green plan just might spark dissident unrest in Eastern Europe. Thus, the Soviets may prefer dealing with a FRG which has a stake in preserving East-West detente and which can influence the United States to follow a less aggressive course to a neutralized FRG which would have no leverage over the

⁵¹Pfplatzgraff, Greens, pp. 77-79.

United States but may be a destabilizing force for Eastern Europe.

On the other hand, the Soviets could easily crush a dissident movement in Eastern Europe, while the Greens would be careful not to provoke the USSR by practicing self-censorship and by following a prudent passive course to weaken the Soviet Feinbild of West Germany.

The Soviets would gladly renounce the rallying cry of German revanchism for the neutralization of the Federal Republic. The Soviets undoubtedly could continue to use American "imperialism" and Chinese "adventurism" as an alternative rallying cry for bloc cohesion. The Green plan probably would not even lead to the denuclearization of East Germany, for the Soviets could justify the continued existence of nuclear weapons there as a counter to American, British and French nuclear forces elsewhere in Europe.

Willy Brandt's son Peter has also devised a plan for the reunification of Germany along with Herbert Ammon. Brandt's plan, though, envisions mutual disarmament and disengagement, rather than unilateral actions.

Brandt's reunification plan would be a long process which would begin with the construction of a negotiated

nuclear free zone in Central Europe. Shortly thereafter, the two Germanies would mutually transform their armed forces into organizations only capable of defensive operations. This would be followed by a mutual disengagement of NATO and Soviet troops from the respective Germanies, leaving only a token force in Berlin.⁵²

The Soviets would probably agree to a mutual denuclearization of the two Germanies for this would decouple American nuclear forces from the FRG. They have long advocated this policy beginning with the Rapacki Plans. Additionally, they would probably readily agree to the denuding of the NVA, for the transformation of the Bundeswehr into a defensive entity, for they generally regard the Bundeswehr as the predominant NATO ground force. One wonders, though what the Soviet and SED interpretation of defensive weapon systems would be. They might justify the retention of armor units and multipurpose jet fighters for defensive purposes.

One also wonders if the Soviets would agree to a complete withdrawal of the Soviet troops in the GDR,

⁵²Herbert Ammon and Peter Brandt, "The German Question", Telos (Spring 1982), p. 41.

for the Soviet military elite would probably be opposed to giving up their forward position in the GDR. In addition, the Soviets may find it more difficult to maintain a military presence in other East European states under legal pretenses.

After the transformation of the military status quo as Brandt calls it, the two German states would begin a partnership on a contractual basis. This nebulous stage would somehow lead to a confederation in which the two states would mutually pledge to not undermine the other state.⁵³ During this process, one sees numerous opportunities for Soviet and SED stonewalling.

This confederation would have a parliament and coordinating office with representatives from both parliaments and governments. The SED and the Soviets would probably only accept this step if they were granted equal status. Among the tasks of the confederal bodies would be a step by step liberalization of travel between the two Germanies. Here the authors waffled as the following excerpt

⁵³Ibid.

showed:

A comprehensive regulation which would guarantee the mobility of citizens cannot be realistically expected of East Germany because of the high risk involved, but this could still remain a long term goal to be realized through the gradual rapprochement process between the two states and people of the two Germanies.⁵⁴

Thus, it appears that Brandt's plan does not even require the dismantling of physical barriers between the two Germanies.

The Soviets, though, might accept this proposal. In the first place there are no requirements for the liberalization of the East German regime, for there is no mention of self-determination or civil rights. It also appears that at any time the Soviets could abort the process because of latent "monopolistic" or "militaristic" tendencies of the FRG. Therefore Brandt's plan reminds one of the East German confederal proposals of the 1950's.

The authors correctly realize that the GDR lacks political legitimacy and the regime's elites want to increase the legitimacy of the regime.⁵⁵ However, they

⁵⁴Ibid; p. 42.

⁵⁵Ibid; pp. 41-43.

fail to realize that the SED is not willing to democratize the regime to achieve legitimation. The authors like the Greens assume that public opinion will hold sway. They also fail to heed the lessons of Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Some West German conservatives also favor a neutralist solution to the German Question. One proponent of a national neutralist solution is Professor Helmuth Diwald of Erlangen University. Diwald maintains that the FRG sold out its sovereignty when it entered the Western alliance in 1955. To him, NATO membership and reunification are incompatible.⁵⁶

According to Diwald the three Western powers have failed to live up to their bargain to work toward reunification as the powers stipulated in the accords which brought the FRG into NATO. Thus, after three decades of NATO and broken promises, the FRG should leave the alliance to regain its maneuver room vis-a-vis the German Question. After breaking from NATO, the FRG should offer neutrality to the Soviet Union in return for unity.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Helmut Diwald in Guido Knopp ed. Die Deutsche Einheit (Aschaffenberg: Paul Pottloch Verlag, 1981, p. 136, 142.

⁵⁷ Ibid; p. 160; p. 180.

Unlike the Greens or Peter Brandt, Diwald does not see the Soviet Union as a misunderstood, defensive, inferior power. Rather he sees a potential coincidence of interests between the FRG and the Soviets a la Rapallo.

At first glance, one might conclude that the Soviets would savor such a plan, for it would lead to a dismissal of the American forces in the FRG. However, Diwald's FRG would not be a pacifist one, rather one that perhaps would consider nuclear forces. Thus, the Soviets might prefer an FRG aligned with the United States, than that of one on Diwald's model.

Diwald, like other nationalist neutralists before, believe that the Soviets would be willing to trade German reunification for a West German exit from NATO and future neutrality. Peter Brandt believes that a FRG nonalignment policy must be coupled with an active West German denuclearization process. Then the Soviets would be willing to fundamentally alter the German Question because Brandt believes that "Soviet policy carefully monitors those signs of change in political consciousness that could be turned to their own advantage."⁵⁸

⁵⁸Ammon and Brandt, "German Question", p. 4.

This writer agrees with Peter Brandt's above contention, however not with the same results. For according to one observer the next generation of West Germans will possibly reject nuclear deterrence regardless of the German Question. The future generation will also probably reject an upgrading of conventional deterrence in lieu of a nuclear one for increased social spending. The new generation generally rejects both the American and Soviet model, however they do not fear the Soviets.⁵⁹

While the center-right coalition of the Christian Democrats and Free Democrats recently won a majority of the German vote with a platform supporting a strong West German role in NATO, several polls of the younger generation show a different story. If the Soviet analysts are as astute as Peter Brandt claims, they have certainly noticed a poll taken in 1982, whose results show that at least one-half of today's German youth favor neutralism.⁶⁰ Another poll taken in 1981 of Germans between 15 and 24 years old demonstrated that only 24 percent of the younger generation support the

⁵⁹Stephen Szabo, "Brandt's Children: The West German Successor Generation". Washington Quarterly (Winter 9184), pp. 50-54.

⁶⁰Pierre Hassner, "The Shifting Foundation", Foreign Policy (Fall 1982), pp. 5-6.

present government coalition. Furthermore, while only approximately five percent of the general electorate support the Greens, 20 percent of the youth in this poll identified with Green policies.⁶¹ French Socialist Andre Gorz wrote the following about the new left's neutralism in 1982:

But if I were Brezhnev I would have no respect for people who can mobilize against the new airport runway in Frankfurt, the nuclear plant in Brokdorf and the Pershing II missiles, but who remain silent about genocide in Afghanistan, Soviet biological weapons, the SS-20S, torture in Czechoslovakia and the Warsaw putsch, but want Siberian natural gas on top of all this.⁶²

Thus, the Soviets may reason that it is only a matter of time before the next generation takes power in the FRG and forsakes NATO, nuclear deterrence and a strong defense without even a promise of reunification. If the above observers' perceptions of the West German youth are correct, the Soviets will have little incentive to consider reunification as an option to detach the FRG from the West. Rather this detachment will be accomplished without the Soviets relinquishing their grip on the GDR.

⁶¹Szabo, "Children", pp. 55-63.

⁶²Andre Gorz, "On the German Non-Response to the Polish Crisis," Telos (Spring 1982), p. 118.

D. Circumstances And Conditions For A Possible Model

The discussion so far paints a bleak picture for the future prospects of German reunification. At the present time, the Soviets have little interest in reunification. However, geopolitical conditions could change inducing the Soviets to consider German reunification.

The third chapter briefly discussed the linkage of the China factor and the German Question in Soviet policy formulation. This linkage now warrants a second look.

In 1969 the Soviets and the East Germans were harassing West German officials who were attempting to hold presidential elections in West Berlin. Abruptly this harassment ceased and the elections were carried out without any further problems. It just so happened that the sudden Soviet restraint in regard to the West German elections had coincided with the Soviet-Chinese border clashes on the Ussuri River and Damansky Island. These border disputes had occurred just three days before the Soviets displayed a sudden desire to improve relations with Bonn by demonstratively briefing the FRG

on the Chinese border disputes.⁶³

Thus, according to Angela Stent Yergin the China factor may have helped move the Soviets to a new German policy in 1969. Specifically Yergin pointed out the "Ussuri and Damansky clashes with the Chinese were decisive catalysts in altering Soviet policy before Brandt was elected chancellor".⁶⁴ There were of course other factors, particularly economic that led the Soviets to accept Brandt's conciliatory Ostpolitik. One, however, should not discount the China factor.

Historically the Soviets have sought to avoid a two front conflict and to avoid an encirclement by their enemies. Therefore, if a powerful China was to emerge threatening Soviet interests in Vietnam, South Asia and even the Soviet Union directly, the Soviets might be willing to barter with the FRG on the German Question.

As long as the Soviet leadership refuses to reform the economic system of the Soviet Union and Soviet economic results continue to pale in comparison with the

⁶³Croan, Soviet Connection, p. 23; Angela Stent Yergin, "Soviet-West German Relations: Finlandization or Normalization?" in George Ginsburg and Alvin Z. Rubinstein eds. Soviet Foreign Policy Toward Western Europe (New York: Praeger, 1978) pp. 112-113.

⁶⁴Stent-Yergin, "Relations", pp. 112-113.

"decadent" West, the Soviet leadership will remain insecure vis-a-vis the West. In this situation, the Soviets will continue to prefer to have the ideological buffer of Eastern Europe, of which the GDR is an essential element.

Some observers may no longer consider Eastern Europe as an ideological buffer because of the influence of the Catholic Church in Poland and the economic reforms of Hungary. Indeed, the limited pluralism of these nations may have some attraction for some Soviet citizens, thereby posing a threat to the CPSU. The ideological threat of the present regimes in these two countries, however, pale in comparison to the possible threat posed by an independent Poland or Hungary, unfettered by Moscow. Thus, Eastern Europe, in its present configuration remains an ideological buffer for the Soviets to the open and highly pluralistic societies of Western Europe.

There is the chance, however, that upon consolidating his power, Mikhail Gorbachev could turn out to be the reformer that many in the West hope he is. If Gorbachev was to enact reforms which would effectively redress Soviet productivity problems in industry and agriculture, perhaps the Soviet elite would begin to shed their insecurity vis-a-vis the West.

A more self confident Soviet elite, buoyed by new economic success, might be willing to loosen their grip on Eastern Europe. Perhaps a dynamic leader like Gorbachev, strengthened by successful economic reforms, might be willing to conduct an active Deutschland politik offering German reunification to the FRG in order to detach the FRG from the West.

One West German observer claims that sooner or later the Soviets will be forced to reform their economic system out of the fear of being outstripped by both the West and the Chinese.⁶⁵ If decentralization and the partial introduction of market forces proves successful in China, the Soviets might follow suit. No doubt the Soviet elite, including Gorbachev are closely watching the Chinese experiment.

According to Ulrich Albrecht, as long as Soviet security fears are unabated, there is no chance for reunification. However, as Albrecht pointed out, the Soviets do not have any real security in Eastern Europe. A much stabler arrangement would be a Finlandization of Eastern Europe instead of the present Sovietization.⁶⁶

⁶⁵Ludwig Bress, "Neurosen Zu Neutralisieren" in Die Deutsche Einheit ed. Guido Knopp (Aschaffenberg: Paul Paltloch Verlag, 1981), pp. 104-106.

⁶⁶Ulrich Albrecht, "The Political Background of the Rapacki Plan of 1957 and its Current Significance" in Germany Debates Defense eds. Rudolf Steinke and Michel Vale (New York: Sharpe Inc., 1983), pp. 117-132.

Thus, a confident Gorbachev might recognize this situation and be willing to relinquish the Soviet grip on Eastern Europe including the GDR. One, however, would be naive to assume that Gorbachev has the same interpretation of stability and security as the Westerner Albrecht. Thus, this scenario is unlikely.

If the Soviet reaction to the Honecker visit is indicative, a return to superpower detente would also be required.

In any event the Soviet leadership must either perceive a need to give up the GDR or feel that it is no longer necessary for regime security. Even then, there would be certain constraints on a reunified Germany.

The model of German reunification the Soviets would consider if any would be a confederation. This confederation would be completely denuclearized and demilitarized. This confederation would also be required to forsake nuclear weapons permanently. The allied forces would be required to disengage from West Germany, while the Soviets, perhaps with much reluctance, would withdraw from East Germany. The Soviets would also put limitations on the nature of the German military forces. Peter Brandt's plan might be acceptable with both armed forces having strictly defensive capabilities.

According to one observer, the Russian people tend to avoid risk and this risk aversion is also inherent in the Soviet leadership. He further stated:

Just like the individual the state is suspicious, mistrustful and cautious in its relations with others, demanding a degree of security that intimidates all those around. The State not only seeks military superiority over its neighbors but also structures its relations with other states as formally as possible, enabling it to evaluate risk more easily.⁶⁷

Thus the Soviets, economic reforms notwithstanding, would want to maintain close ties with the GDR, insuring that the East German half remained in COMECON. In addition, the Soviets would probably demand a clause in the agreement that the Soviets would be legally allowed to reenter the GDR in the event that the "Socialist achievements of the workers' state" were threatened. The East German half would be required to maintain its orientation to the East. Thus, Peter Brandt's model approximates my model.

Barring a radical change in the Soviet political system, the Soviets will simply not tolerate anything but an artificial confederation. Perhaps the East German state would evolve into a more progressive

⁶⁷John M. Joyce, "The Old Russian Legacy," Foreign Policy (Summer 1984), p. 137.

liberal entity, but it would retain the trappings of a one party state. The German confederacy would have to keep Soviet foreign policy interests closely in consideration when formulating policy. The German confederacy would consist of a Finlandized western state and Hungarianized eastern state minus Soviet troops.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

From the summit conferences, the Soviets' preference for a weak, neutral reunified Germany vulnerable to Soviet pressure first emerged. While they continued to pursue the attainment of this maximal objective by diplomatic means in 1946 and 1947, they also took steps to insure that their minimal objective (Sovietization of East Germany) could be accomplished. However, there was no grand strategy to accomplish these objectives, for there was confusion and dissension on the part of Stalin's lieutenants. A factor of this discord was the Soviet reparations policy, which continued to take precedence until 1950, even though it had a negative impact on the attainment of both objectives.

After 1950, Stalin continued to conduct this two track policy. In response to the emergence of the West German state, he pursued an aggressive diplomatic policy to accomplish his maximal objective. At the same time he continued to implement measures, which would insure the existence of a pliant, Communist, East Germany.

Throughout the 1950's the neutralization of West

Germany remained the major objective of the Soviet German policy. At times their major objective conflicted with their minor aim -- the political consolidation of the East German regime.

In the aftermath of Stalin's death the Soviet leadership may have been willing to sacrifice their minimum aim to achieve their maximum aim. In any event, the Soviet policy towards the German Question was still quite fluid. After the Red Army crushed the Berlin workers in August of 1953, the Soviets became increasingly committed to the attainment of their minimal objective. The immediate steps the Soviets took to strengthen the SED regime after the riots signified this renewed commitment.

Prior to the ratification of the Paris Accords, the Soviets still attempted to use the lure of German reunification to prevent a militarily strong FRG aligned with the West. Many observers thought that the Soviet Union was willing to sacrifice their minimal goal -- the consolidation of the GDR to reach their maximum goal. There is, however, considerable evidence to show that the Soviets were only using reunification as a ploy to delay or prevent West German entry into a Western defense system. The fact that all the Soviet proposals on the German Question after the Berlin Conference were

reactions to Western moves to incorporate the FRG into a Western alliance and coincided with parliamentary debate on ratification supports this view. The many ambiguities or escape clauses of each Soviet proposal also support the argument that the Soviets were only using reunification as bait and that they were not seriously considering it.

After the ratification of the Paris Accords, the Soviet position on the German Question quickly hardened. Soviet behavior at the two Geneva conferences and during Adenauer's visit suggests that the Soviets were no longer willing to sacrifice their minimal aim to achieve their maximal one. One must admit, though, that a Western failure to probe Soviet intentions may have undercut a Soviet faction more amenable to compromise.

The Soviet compromise on Austria in 1955 did not mean that the Soviets were willing to allow German reunification on the Austrian model. The benefits the Soviets gained from the Austrian State Treaty outweighed the minor costs they sustained. Austrian neutrality was not a model for a unified Germany, but perhaps for nonaligned nations, smaller NATO nations and the FRG.

The introduction of nuclear weapons into West Germany in 1956 brought a new dimension to the German Question. The various Soviet bloc proposals from 1956

to 1958 were designed to prevent West German access to nuclear weapons. Their actions and proposals show, however, that the Soviets were not willing to desert the GDR to obtain the denuclearization and neutralization of the FRG. In fact, their persistent refusal to discuss reunification with the Western powers confirms the hardening of their position.

After achieving little progress towards the attainment of either their minimal or maximal goals through negotiations, traditional diplomacy and their media, the Soviets switched to confrontational tactics. Internal political factors and the merging Sino-Soviet rift may have also pushed Khrushchev towards his see-saw confrontational tactics. Although Khrushchev's tactics after 1958 failed to achieve the maximal aim of the Soviet policy, the result of his brinkmanship -- the Berlin Wall, solidified the East German regime.

It has been almost 25 years since the Berlin Wall was constructed to consolidate the teetering SED regime. In that time, the GDR, once an international pariah, has become a confident, active junior partner of the Soviet Union. The GDR has proven to be a faithful political, ideological and military ally for the Soviets in Eastern Europe on numerous occasions. Throughout the 1970's and 1980's the GDR played an increasingly active role as a

military ally of the Soviets in the Third World, particularly Africa.

Partly because of its special relationship with the FRG, the GDR has become an economic power in its own right. At the same time the economies of the GDR and the Soviet Union have become increasingly integrated and interdependent.

The GDR retains its military significance to the Soviets as both a defensive glacis and as a jump-off point for offensive action against the West. One should also not discount the use of the GDR as a staging area for Soviet intervention in Eastern Europe.

Most importantly, the GDR serves as the linchpin of the Soviet ideological buffer of Eastern Europe. To let the GDR become part of even a totally neutralized, demilitarized unified German state might produce serious spillover consequences for not only the questionable Communist regimes in Eastern Europe like Poland, but also for the Soviet republics in the Ukraine and the Baltic region. Thus, as long as the GDR retains its importance to the USSR, it is doubtful that the Soviets will let the GDR become part of a unified Germany.

The negative Soviet reaction to the recent inter-German rapprochement and Honecker's scheduled visit to the FRG confirms this view. Their reaction also

demonstrates that the Soviets remain the key to the German Question.

As far as the Soviets are concerned, the German Question is closed for the time being. They do not want a reunified strong Communist Germany, for this could create a "second China" on the Soviet western periphery. The major objective of the Soviet German policy is still to detach the FRG from the United States and NATO. The minimal aim of its German policy is no longer to consolidate the GDR, rather to retain the Soviet grip on the SED regime.

Presently the Soviets are not willing to give up their hold on the GDR to detach the FRG from the West. Given the current trends of neutralism in the FRG, the Soviets may feel that both aims of their German policy can be accomplished in the near future.

Of the neutralist models that have been surveyed in this thesis, the Peter Brandt model approximates the model the Soviets would most likely consider. Even this basically artificial confederation would pose certain risks for the Soviets.

The current geopolitical situation is not conducive to the future prospects of German reunification. Under the current conditions the Soviets would prefer the status quo to even the weak anemic confederation offered

by Peter Brandt and this writer. Barring a major change in the geopolitical situation in Europe or meaningful economic or political change in the Soviet Union (both unlikely) the German Question of reunification will remain on hold.

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